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ESSEX

ITS FOREST, FOLK, AND FOLKLORE.

A FOOTNOTE TO HISTORY

BY

CHARLOTTE CRAVEN MASON

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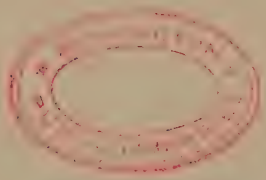

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DEDICATION.

To all those who have helped in the compilation of these pages by recounting old stories, superstitions, songs and facts concerning places and customs, this book is gratefully

dedicated by the Author.

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EPPING FOREST AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS.

The Forest of Essex, later called the Forest of Waltham, and still more latterly Epping Forest, originally covered 66,000 acres. It included, of course, the Forest of Hainault. It ran from Bow almost to Cambridge, and from thence to Colchester, and also extended along the banks of the Thames. The leighs, or leys, so prominent in such place names as Hadleigh, Rayleigh, Hockley, etc., were clearings in the forest.

Epping Forest has been called "The Romance of London." For generations the citizens of London held hunting rights in the forest. Hunting has ceased, but the citizens still traverse the sylvan glades, and to City children it is indeed "The Romance of London."

There is about a forest something which stirs our imagination, our sense of wonder and awe. Perhaps it is something handed down to us from the past, when our ancestors were all forest dwellers. How we revelled as children in weird stories of woods and forests, fairies, witches, and marvellous flowers and animals. We owe many things to forests, and it is said that church bells are among the number. There are two stories as to their origin: one says they were invented to guide worshippers to the

churches in the times when there were no roads—they could follow the direction of the sound of the bells; another story says they were originally used to frighten away the evil spirits who lived in the forest and who made it their duty to try to prevent the forest folks from attending service. Perhaps it was something of both of these beliefs which caused bells to be used.

We have all been stirred by the story of Queen Boadicea and her wrongs, and the Forest of Essex will always be famous as the place where she had her fastnesses. There is at Messing a glorious wood where she is supposed to have made her last stand. It is a spot worth excavating, as apparently there are Roman remains there. Loughton Camp and Amesbury Banks, are also supposed to have been fastnesses of the tragic queen.

We have enough still left of the original forest to show us what our county was like in the days of old. But words are poor things by which to describe the beauties of a wood or a forest; we must see these things for ourselves in order to know what they are like. William Morris said of our Epping Forest, "it has a peculiar charm all its own, not to be found in any other forest," while George Borrow said it was "the loveliest forest in all the world."

The forest has gradually become smaller, and there have been several attempts to secure all of it as private property.

The battle lasted several years, during which time certain forces were trying to take the forest and make it into private property. Fences were put

around portions, or owners of property would gradually extend their borders. In 1851 was formed the Open Spaces Committee, which took up this matter, as did also the Commons Preservation Society.*

†The first chairman of this Society was Mr. Shaw Lefevre. Among the members were Miss Octavia Hill, Mr. John Stuart Mill, Mr. W. H. Smith, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Fawcet, Sir T. Fowel-Buxton, and Mr. E. N. Buxton. There was a Forest Fund raised, of which Mr. Frederick Young was the Chairman, and Mr. G. S. Smith, Hon. Secretary. Then there was the man called the "Forest Hampden," Thomas Willingale by name, whose forefathers for generations had lived on the products of the Forest. Willingale organized bands of men who pulled down fences which had been put around public land. Mr. Burney helped in this way, too; he brought down 'bus loads of navvies from London to level fences.

**Matters were brought to a climax when a firm of steam plough makers were allowed to pull up trees by the roots in Hainault. A law suit lasting fifteen years was the result, but in 1874 the City of London secured 5,500 acres of the Forest. And in 1882

* Another Forest helper, we are told in Jarold's *Guide to the Forest*, was that much criticised character Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector of England. An Act of Parliament was passed in 1653 for the sale of all woods belonging to Charles I. This doubtless would have been done but for Cromwell's foresight in recommending that the Forest rights should be restored and the Forest Courts reorganized.

† Mr. Edward North Buxton's book on Epping Forest.

** Cox's *Royal Forests of England*.

Queen Victoria stood on the highest part—High Beech—to present the Forest *"for the free use of the people for ever."* Surely a more fitting subject for a picture than that of Queen Elizabeth reviewing her troops at Tilbury.

There is much talk about the "spacious days of Queen Elizabeth," but she was a tyrant none the less. When visiting the Forest or other places, she sent out Purveyors who had the right to take what they wanted from people's larders. The town of Colchester got into trouble with her highness for resenting this so-called right. The Puritans made a stand against this prerogative, and as a result an Essex lawyer, named Morris, was degraded and kept a prisoner in Tilbury Castle. Another Essex man, named Wentworth, was also imprisoned for asserting those principles which are now "the corner stones of our British constitution."

Among those who have loved Epping Forest were the poets William and Mary Howitt, and Tennyson. The latter lived at Beech Hill House, High Beech, where he wrote *Maud*, *The Talking Oak*, and *Locksley Hall*. The following description suits High Beech well:

> "A mound of ever sloping side
> Whereon a hundred stately birches grew
> And here and there great hollies under them,
> But for a mile around was open space
> And fern and heath."

The Howitts dearly loved our Forest, and used to reside at Long Running, near Theydon Bois. In his *Year Book of the Country*, William says, "We

break the spell of town dreariness and are once more in the woods. We take our first flight into the near Forest of Epping. We walk for miles in green glades and beneath the close covert of the horn beam trees.'' William and Mary Howitt published in conjunction in 1823 (the year of their marriage) *The Forest Minstrel.*

Epping is one of the oldest ''burys.'' Domesday Book says that ''Waltham Holy Cross always held Epping for a Manor.'' This manor was originally divided into two — Epping Bury and Epping Presbyter. Morant, in his *History of Essex*, says that the latter held a Court in his day, under a maple tree in the road between Eppingbury and the town. Morant also tells us that William, Lord Grey, in 1670 claimed at the Forest Court, among other privileges, the right to hold a weekly market on Fridays, first granted by King Henry III. in 1253; and two fairs, one at Whitsuntide and one in October.

Every Forest parish had its own particular mark with which to brand the cattle. That of Chigwell was a curious mark with a part of a crown over it. Barking had two, one called a Maypole, and the other a Crooked Billet. There were many Forest officials, among whom were Reeves, who branded the cattle; Woodwards, who had care of the timber; Regarders and Agisters, who looked after game and cattle. Then there were Foresters and Verderers. They each had their badge of office. The ancient families of the Mountfitchets and the De Veres of

Hedingham Castle were hereditary Lord Wardens.† When the London County Council took over, what remained of the Forest was put under the care of a Committee of twelve Council men and four Verderers. The Duke of Connaught is Chief Ranger.

Outlaws and robbers were plentiful in the Forest in the eighteenth century. Dick Turpin, Jack Shepherd, and many other rogues had their lairs there. It is told of Dr. Gold, Minister of Brickfields Congregational Church, Stratford, that he once went to speak at a meeting at Waltham Abbey, going part of the way on horseback and part on foot. After leaving his horse, he was suddenly accosted by a robber who threatened his life. Dr. Gold began to sing in a loud voice, "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah." This had the effect of terrifying the highwayman, who ran for his life.

A few years ago there died at Rettenden an old man who used to tell of his father, who drove a coach between Woodford and London. One day the coach was held up at Stratford by armed highwaymen, and the passengers robbed in broad daylight.

A part of the Forest, called in those days The Warren, which was just outside the gates of Copt Hall, was a notorious place for robbers. Honest folk were afraid to go out after dark, so great was the fear of these men, till Mr. John Conyers,* the then owner of Copt Hall, had these thickets cut down, and drove the robbers out of their hiding place. But he did a better thing still, built cottages for

† Cox's *Royal Forests*.

* *Walks in Epping Forest*.

them to live in, and succeeded in turning these robbers into decent workers upon his estate. A deed worthy of a Victoria Cross!

Should anyone wish to be told of a peaceful and delightful drive, I would recommend starting from Theydon Bois station, going straight across that glorious village green, climbing the steep hill from which grand views are to be obtained, pass Birch Hall, and proceed along the road through the depth of the Forest, down Jack's Hill. Then, emerging upon the main Epping Road at the Wake Arms, cross the road and drive down Woodredden Hill, from whence a fine view of Waltham is seen, along Honey Lane, and thence into Waltham Town. The Abbey, of course, will be visited; it was built by King Edward the Confessor, and there King Harold is buried.

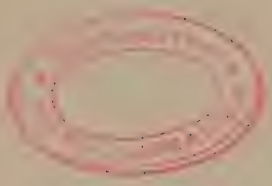
Here at Waltham lived Fuller, the curate who wrote the *Book of Worthies*, in which so many Essex folks figure. Here Fox wrote his *Acts and Monuments of the Martyrs*.

Havering-atte-Bower, where King Edward the Confessor had his palace, was in his time in the very heart of the Forest of Essex. Here it was that legend tells us he received the pilgrims from the Holy Land who brought him his ring and the message from St. John the Divine. Here the nightingales disturbed him at his devotions. Here his queen, the beautiful and good Lady Editha, worked at her wonderful embroidery. We are told she made all the king's state robes.

Fairlop was the scene of the famous, or rather infamous, Fairlop Fair. The giant oak under which the Fair was held was destroyed, it is said, by gipsies who lit a fire inside the decayed trunk. Pieces of the tree were used for various objects. Daniel Day, "Good Day" by nickname, had his coffin made from one of the branches. The pulpits at St. Pancras and Wanstead churches were made from it, and small pieces were sold.

Daniel Day owned property near the old oak, and used to go down there from Wapping on the first Friday in July, inviting friends to go with him to partake of a feast of beans and bacon under the tree. After the feast he gave away quantities of bacon and beans to anyone who cared to come for them. Gradually the Fairlop Fair arose out of this, until it became of such a character that it was deemed advisable to do away with it. This was in 1843. The Fairlop Procession continued for some years after the Fair was done away with. This Procession consisted of block and pump makers, and shipbuilders of Wapping, who came in conveyances made in the form of a ship. It is said that this arose from the fact that Daniel Day had an aversion to all carriages after an accident, and used to come down by boat on Barking Creek, and ordained that when he was buried his body should be taken to Barking by water. This boat of the block and pump makers was drawn by beautiful horses ridden by postilions in blue and gold. The shipbuilders' colours were blue and white. The ships were fully rigged and bands played on board. The Procession came through

FAIRLOP OAK, HAINAULT FOREST



Stratford, whose ancient name was Stratford Langthorne, on through Forest Gate and Manor Park, through Ilford and Barkingside, on to Fulwell Hatch and up the hill to "The Bald Hind" at Chigwell. By Hainault Road it reached the mainroad at Chigwell, then, turning to the left, went through Woodford to Wanstead and Leytonstone, till it came again to Stratford at St. John's Church, and so again to Wapping.

Epping Forest was divided into Walks, and Wanstead Flats, otherwise Hamfrith Waste, was in the East and West Hainault Walks. The Manor of Aldersbrook was at the East Ham end of The Flats; Morant says that in 1669 the owner of Aldersbrook, Francis Osbaston, claimed for "himself and heirs, among other things, the right of common in the waste of the Forest for himself and tenants, and also complete and reasonable estover of wood for fuel in the Walks of East and West Hainault on the Feast of the Nativity of Christ and St. John the Baptist yearly."

During the struggle over the Forest, palings were put around a portion of the Flats, but either Willingale's men or Mr. Burney's promptly pulled them down.

The author of *The Royal Forests of England* has this interesting note concerning Wanstead: "The ancient right of the Crown to forest honey may be traced in the claim of the Lords of the Manor of Wanstead, Essex, to the profit of bees, honey and wax in Wanstead Wood (most likely Bush Wood).

One of the items in the charge at the Epping Swainmote was, 'If any man do take out of the hollow of trees any honie, wax, or swarms of bees within the forest, ye shall do us to weel.' "

It is said that an avenue of splendid trees once stretched across Wanstead Flats, leading to the famous Wanstead House, in which dwelt the unfortunate Catherine Tynley Long, the Essex heiress.

A house upon the Flats called "Lake House," said to have been a banqueting house belonging to Wanstead House, was where Tom Hood lived. Alas this, like Wanstead House, has disappeared. It had a Grinling Gibbon fireplace and a beautifully painted ceiling. In this house Tom Hood wrote *The Song of the Shirt*.

The grounds of Wanstead House were purchased by the London County Council, and left in their natural state of wild beauty. It has charming walks beside beautiful lakes, and on the island in the Heron Lake rare birds may be seen. In the spring the park used to be a picture with its colouring of bluebells.

The flora of Epping Forest was at one time very fine, but of late years there have not been many flowers on account of the many people who gathered them, and because of the draining operations, which destroyed the kinds which grew only in moist places. The lily of the valley used to flourish there, the Grass of Parnassus, the rare sundew, and oxlips; in fact almost all the British wild flowers grew in Epping Forest.

The history of the Forest of Essex, like that of other forests is one of "oppression and violence." William I. made some very cruel forest laws, and the so-called rights of the crown to all that appertained to forests caused a great deal of misery. The killing of a man was a far less grievous crime than the killing of game. A fine only was often inflicted for killing a man, but the loss of both eyes or even the death penalty was the punishment for killing the animals. For making the deer run so that they were out of breath, a freeman had to pay a fine of ten shillings. A serf had to pay twenty, but a poor bondman was *to lose his skin*.

In the reign of Henry II. the Forest Laws were cruelly enforced. When his widow, Queen Eleanor, was made Regent, while her son Richard Coeur de Lion was in captivity, she mercifully relaxed these wicked enactments, forgiving all forest offences. This she did "for the health of Henry's soul." Those who were pardoned had to promise to pray for the soul of the late king.

The United Barons wrung from Eleanor's other son, King John, "The Charter of the Forest." But it took much persuasion, and bribes too, to make later Monarchs administer this Charter. Their concern was not for the people, but for themselves, and the deer and other wild beasts were not protected from any humane purpose, but that later they might be cruelly hunted.

Every Forest dweller on reaching the age of twenty-one had in olden times to take the Forest Oath, promising not to harm the animals, and to take

word to the officials of any known to them who broke the law.

If these things are borne in mind when we enjoy our glorious forests, we shall realize all the more what we owe to those fighters for freedom and liberty in the past.

KENSINGTON
ISRAEL

YE OLDE FOREST GATE

THE GATE TO THE FOREST

(FOREST GATE)

THERE were several gateways to Epping Forest; some were called Hatches. We have a survival of these in place names such as Fulwell Hatch, West Hatch, etc. But the famous gate was that which gave its name to the populous suburb—Forest Gate. Miss Catherine Fry, daughter of Mrs. Elizabeth Fry, says in her *History of East and West Ham*, "The hamlet situate beyond the highway (from Upton) known as Forest Gate, and now an important district of the parish of West Ham, used in former years to consist of only two or three gentlemen's houses and the little wooden hut, occupied by the keeper of 'the Gate to the Forest,' which was generally shut to prevent cattle straying from Wanstead Flats."

This gate house stood in the Woodgrange Road, at the corner of Forest Street. The wooden hut was succeeded by a brick structure of one storey and one room. The house was used as a Toll house; two pence had to be paid for carts. In 1833 the forest stretched right up to the gate and the deer used to come thus far. The toll house was pulled down in 1881. The gate was in disuse at the time

and was propped up against the side of the house. The gate was not far from Wanstead Flats, called in the old days Lower Epping Forest, and Hamfrith Waste. The name Hamfrith is very interesting. One remembers that the earliest English Guilds were called Frith Guilds, and were formed for the keeping of the peace. Ham means village or town' of which we have the survival in the word hamlet. Morant tells us, quoting from Camden's *Remains*, that Frith or Fryth in old English was a plain amidst woods, and that is just what Hamfrith Waste was and still is. Morant says that at Langdon Clay the Bishop of London enclosed a wood called the Fryth, where he held a view of frankpledge. A Frith-Soken meant a frankpledge. The frankpledges were the predecessors of the Frith Guilds.

Quite near to Hamfrith Waste stood the beautiful old house called originally "Hamfrith,"* but in later years "West Ham Hall." The front was covered with a magnificent magnolia, and the pleasure gardens were very fine. In 1822, "Hamfrith" belonged to James Humphreys, Lord of the Manor, who planted the row of chestnuts which are in the road called Chestnut Avenue. The Midland Railway bought the house eventually, as they ran a branch line through the grounds. The Hall was soon after pulled down.

Hamfrith Waste, or Wanstead Flats, was covered with wild flowers in the youth of many still living. Elm trees also grew there in abundance, a certain group being called The Seven Sisters. Cornfields

* Hamfrith at a later time belonged to Samuel Gurney.

stretched along by the side of Capel Road to Manor Park. Folks still residing in Forest Gate went gleaning in these fields in their youth.

Some of the fields had strange names, such as Jackass Field, Buckshead, White House, Gravelpit, Redhouse, Frisby's Meadow.

Trees were a great feature of Forest Gate. Lime and ash trees grew in the Forest Lane, while along the Woodgrange Road there were many oak and beech trees. On what is now the Woodgrange Estate there grew a great number of fruit trees. A chase ran along where now is Hampton Road.

The Manor of Woodgrange* belonged to West Ham Abbey till the suppression of the Monasteries by Henry VIII. Queen Elizabeth gave this Manor to the Earl of Leicester. Some of the privileges enjoyed by the Abbot of West Ham Abbey were also enjoyed by the later owners of Woodgrange, viz., "to cut down and carry away wood or timber out of their woods in the Forest of Essex; pasture for 800 sheep—between the Frith or Woodgrange and Walthamstow," etc.

The James Humphreys (Lord of the Manor) referred to died in 1830, and was succeeded by his brother Edward in the Manor of East West Ham. The family lived in the Manor House, opposite Wanstead Flats at the Manor Park end. The house is now the Roman Catholic Reformatory (now in the parish of East Ham). This house was bought of the Humphrey family in 1840 by the Eastern Counties Railway for £10,000. Later it was

* See Note on *Granges and Barns*, page 37,

sold to William Storrs Fry, a son of Mrs. Elizabeth Fry, for a much smaller sum.

There stood some charming old houses near the Leytonstone end of Wanstead Flats, in a winding old lane which now goes by the name of Sidney Road. These fine old houses have all been pulled down. The Pawnbrokers Alms-Houses once stood at the Romford Road end of Woodgrange Road; these were very picturesque and, in front, had beautiful gardens in which rhododendrons flourished. Woodgrange House stood at the corner of Earlham Grove, but the same story alas, can be told of all these fine houses—shops, shops, shops !

There were two schools in Forest Gate in 1850. One was called "The Penny School," as the scholars paid that sum weekly for their education. This school was kept by Miss Louisa Dalton, generally known as Dolly Dalton. She was not popular with the youth of the place, on account of her harshness in tying them to the table legs, pretending to sew up their mouths with needle and thread, and putting the little ones to stand on forms with their pinafores over their heads, etc.

*Mr. Jabez Legg, of the Green, Stratford, used to visit Miss Dalton's school every Monday morning. One day he found a small scholar in disgrace for talking. She was wearing a dunce's cap on her head and a red paper tongue around her neck.

* Mr. Jabez Legg was the founder of the Congregational Church at Forest Gate.

Miss Sturgess, the Quakeress, who lived in Woodgrange Road, used to teach Scripture at this school and was greatly beloved.

The second school was kept by Mrs. G.; she called it a "Cemetery for young ladies!" Mrs. G. described a Sunday afternoon gathering she attended as "a meeting of congealed spirits."

There were several quaint characters in Forest Gate sixty years ago. There was Miss T., who used to dye her hair different colours, and who wore long ribbons with bells attached to the ends, which the children called "cat bells." Miss T. was a really splendid harpist.

Then there was Mr. Bear, who married Miss Peacock; they had twin children whom they named Adam and Eve. "Father" Catton, a Quaker of Plaistow, was a well-known character in West Ham. He was one of the first to use a magic lantern and was a great favourite at gatherings of young folks. He erected the first drinking fountain in Plaistow The baker's daughter at Forest Gate bore the appropriate name of Sally Lunn!

Upton, which was once a village, is now swallowed up in the general name of Forest Gate. Upton House was the birthplace of Lord Lister, the famous surgeon. Sir Philip Hall lived in this house in 1727. It was later owned by Mr. Joseph Jackson Lister, the father of Lord Lister. Mr. Lister was a great botanist and possessed many beautiful plants and trees. After his time Mr. Spedding Curwen, son of the Rev. John Curwen,

of Tonic Sol-fa fame, resided there. The house still stands and bears a tablet stating that it was the birthplace of the great surgeon.

Opposite to Upton House is West Ham Park, in which stood Ham House, where Mrs. Elizabeth Fry's brother, Samuel Gurney,* resided. Mrs. Fry lived at "The Cedars," in The Portway, not far from Ham House. It is mostly called "Upton Lane." It was here she received a visit from the King of Prussia.

The history of Ham House is very interesting. Prior to Samuel Gurney's time it was called Upton House. In 1566, there stood on its site a still older house, called Rook Hall, after the family who owned it. There are tablets in West Ham Church to members of the Rook family. In 1666 the hall was sold to Sir Robert Smyth, of Upton. After holding the property for nearly a hundred years, the Smyth family sold it to Admiral Elliott, who is said to have brought from the Levant the cedar trees for which the park was noted. He gave away a great number of young cedar trees to his neighbours, and that is the reason why there were so many houses in Forest Gate with cedars in the gardens. In 1762, Dr. Fothergill, the great botanist and eminent physician, bought the estate and much extra land. He made the grounds very beautiful; they were said to be next only to Kew Gardens. He brought trees and shrubs from all over the world, and sent plants

* Samuel Gurney gave the land for the building of the Congregational Church in Forest Lane, Forest Gate, paid for the erection of a clock tower to the building, and left money in his will for its perpetual upkeep.

to all parts of the world. Miss Fry, in her *History of West and East Ham*, tells us that a part of the grounds was called "Perpetual Spring." Dr. Fothergill had canals made in the gardens. Persons from all parts of the earth used to visit these grounds.

Dr. Fothergill used to ride to London every day in his coach and four. He died about 1800. Mr. James Shepherd then bought the estate. Mr. Samuel Gurney having married Mr. Shepherd's daughter Elizabeth, the property came to him.

Upton Lane, in which these famous people lived, was once one of the prettiest lanes in Essex. It was called "One Tree Lane," on account of an oak tree of rare species which stood at the Forest Gate end, near Emmanuel Church. It is said that Dr. Fothergill planted it.

At the corner of what is now Catherine Road, Forest Gate, but which was at one time called Red Post Lane and King Harry's Road, there stood a row of cottages called Sun Row, nicknamed Irish Row, on account of the number of Irish folk who lived there. Mrs. Fry used to visit these cottages. On the opposite side of Red Post Lane stood Plashet Hall, a fine old house with an observatory on the roof. This house went by the name of Potato Hall.

The story is told of an old Irish woman who lived in Sun Row, that one day on being asked how her husband was she answered, "An sure, me faith, he woke up dead this morning."

About sixty years ago, Forest Gate railway bridge was the meeting place of the Fry, Gurney, and Barclay families. Every Monday morning they all

gathered at this spot, the adults on horseback, the children on long-tailed ponies. After a ride together they had lunch at one or other of the houses —taking it in turns to entertain. Mrs. Barclay rejoiced in the unusual name of Richenda, and the lady to whom I am indebted for this account says she used to wait on the bridge to see the meeting of these relatives, and heard Mrs. Barclay addressed as "Chelly."

SIXTY YEARS AGO.

Some sixty years ago, when towns were not,
And houses were but few,
We then could boast of country lanes
And fields where rhubarb grew;

Large meadows filled with buttercups,
Both stiles and kissing gates,
But now it's all been built upon
And men collect the rates.

A five-mile walk we often took
And did not think it far;
But now if folks go half a mile
They jump upon a car.

Oh the good old times, the good old times,
When we were young and healthy;
But now its rush and tear and drive,
Just trying to get wealthy.

M. PIPE,
Forest Gate.

GYPSIES, HAINAULT FOREST

THE ROMANY FOLK

No account of the Forest of Essex would be complete without mention of the Gipsies.* George Borrow tells us that there was no place in all the world for them like Epping Forest. In *Romano Lavo Lil* he tells of an interview with a Gipsy Queen, who asks him about Epping Forest. He tells her the foregoing, and adds, "Them that wants to see Romany chals† should go to the Forest, especially to the 'Bald-faced Hind,'‡ on the hill above Fairlop, on the day of Fairlop Fair. It is their trysting-place, as you would say, and there they musters from all parts of England, and there they whoops, dances, and plays, keeping some order nevertheless, because the Rye of all the Romans is in the house, seated behind the door."

"Roman lads before the door
Bravely fiddle.
Here I sit within the door,
And hear them fiddle."

* A lady tells that when a small child she was taken in a family party for a picnic to the Forest. No sooner was a white cloth spread on the ground, and the dinner laid out, than they were entirely surrounded by Gipsies, who took up sitting positions and hemmed them in. These Gipsies wore very picturesque garments, the men had cloaks, the women gay shawls, and all had bright coloured silk handkerchiefs on their heads.

† Gipsy lads. The girls are Romany chies. *Romano Lavo Lil.*

‡ The "Bald Hind" at the top of Hainault Road, Chigwell.

Borrow tells in *Romano Lavo Lil* of a young Gipsy woman whose identity was unknown, who used to attend Fairlop Fair. She was very beautiful but he says, "She was quite alone among the Gipsies. She was always to be found near the 'Bald-faced Hind' on the first Friday in July, dressed in a red cloak and a large beaver. She told fortunes behind the trees. Her language was of the most terrible kind. She used to go to Goodwood, where she could be seen standing by the carriage of a countess, telling her fortune with the voice of a pythoness. She then was dressed in a beautiful riding dress, her hair fantastically plaited and adorned with pearls." Sometimes she was dressed in black silk. She had a deep, musical voice. Borrow did his best to find out who she was, but never succeeded.

The Wanstead Flats was a great place for Gipsies. Borrow tells of an Irish Gipsy, called "Old Mike," who lived on the Flats in the summer. He had a brother who was a great fighter and was afraid of no-one except old Mike, who could tame him when in his fiercest moods, simply by holding up his finger.

Some of the Gipsy Lees lived on Wanstead Flats. An old inhabitant of Forest Gate tells me that when the king of the Lee tribe died, a lad who lived on the Flats, called Topsy Lee, was chosen to succeed him, but refused the honour. As a child Topsy was very pretty, and was greatly loved and indulged by his near relatives. He had three very handsome aunts, who with his mother used to visit a certain toy

shop in Forest Gate, where they spent a considerable amount on toys for the favourite. Although these women had plenty of money for toys, they used to beg tissue paper from the shop-keeper to curl their hair with.

It was a Gipsy Lee, I believe, who told a correct fortune to the cook at Lake House (Tom Hood's home). It was that she would marry a butcher who was a widower with three children, and that she would have seven of her own, five girls and two boys. All this came true, and it is to one of the five girls I am indebted for the story.

Not only the Lees, but the Smiths lived on Wanstead Flats. The world-famous evangelist, Gipsy Smith, and his sister Lovey Smith, lived there when young.

Hainault Forest, Chigwell Row, was also the camping ground of many Gipsies until the London County Council took over the Forest. The Gipsies were then turned off and went to settle at Eastwood, near Southend-on-Sea, where they bought a large piece of land which still contains a Gipsy camp. When they were at Hainault they were great thieves; they used to waylay children going to school in the mornings and steal their dinners. Gipsy Lee and Gipsy Smith were two fortune tellers who lived in Hainault Forest. They used to go to the "Kings' Head" at Chigwell, where they were allowed to tell fortunes in the garden.

When the writer lived at Chigwell as a child, she was warned never to look inside a Gipsy's caravan, or she would be taken away by the owners. On one

occasion, when she was supposed to be lost, and fear was entertained lest the Gipsies should have stolen her, searchers were sent out into the forest. One of these saw a man with a sack over his shoulder, so he stopped him and felt in the sack to find out if the lost one was there. She was, however, soon found, having strayed no further than the cornfields near home.

When thinking of the antagonism of the Gipsies towards others than their own folk, one must remember the cruelties which have been practised upon them in the past by the laws of England and of Scotland, though in the latter country at an early time, we are told, they were better treated than anywhere else, and that they "dansit before the king in Holyrudhous" (1530). But in 1541 an Act was passed commanding "the Egyptians to pass forth of the realm," "under pain of death."

Thus in Edinburgh in 1611 four men were hanged being Egyptians. In Haddington, the men were "to be hangit, the women to be drowned, and suche of the women as has children to be scourgit through the burgh and burnt in the cheek." In Durham in 1592 five men were hanged for being Egyptians.

A law passed in 1562, and repealed in 1783, made it a felony without benefit of clergy to be seen for a month in the company of Gipsies.

"The distinguishing garb of the Gipsy woman consists of a bright silk handkerchief around the neck and a coloured table cloth tied over her back,

massive ear rings and rings, coral necklaces, and the abundant black hair plaited in many braids.'' Some of the most beautiful hands I have ever seen were those of a Gipsy woman. Some of the men, as well as the women, are very handsome—dazzling white teeth, flashing black eyes and regular features.

For State occasions the Gipsies have very smart clothes. Borrow tells of a Gipsy king who on his blue coat had buttons which were gold coins. His horse had silver shoes. It is said that ''in August, 1878, Queen Victoria was welcomed to Dunbar by a Gipsy Queen of the Reynolds family, who was dressed in black and white, with a yellow handkerchief. Behind her stood two women, one in a rich gown of purple velvet, while two men were there in scarlet coats.''

Many Gipsies are skilled musicians. The Roberts family, it is said, were wonderful players, and Gipsy harpists have been famous.

It is considered that there are no workers in finely wrought iron work like Gipsies, and they are supposed to be able to make the best horse shoes.*

The women have been skilled in fortune telling and in getting simple-minded and credulous folk to part with their money, though very often the men

* The story is told of a Gipsy who went to live in a cottage, that he was commissioned by a lady to make her a caravan. He was to make it as well and as nicely as he possibly could. He built a most beautiful caravan, but all the material he got on credit. When it was complete he got up very early one morning, stole some fine horses from a farmer, drove away in the caravan, and was never seen again.

also have been fortune tellers. In the life of William Cowper, the hymn writer, we are told the weird story of the Gipsy man who went fortune telling to Felsted School, where Cowper's brother John was a scholar. This tinker and pedlar told the boy that he would not remain long at the school, but would go to a larger one and then to a University, would not marry before thirty, but after that age his fate was obscure. In a short time he was removed from Felsted and sent to Eton. He then went to a University. These two parts of the Gipsy's fore-telling having come true, John felt sure that what had been said about his fate being obscure after thirty meant that he would die at this age, which he did, but whether on account of suggestion, or whether he would have done so had not the Gipsy put the idea into his mind, one cannot tell.

Town folk as well as country ones have been, and still are, superstitious concerning Gipsies. A Gipsy's curse and a Gipsy's blessing are both very potent. In a book published in 1885, called *News from the Invisible World*, "compiled from the works of Baxter, Wesley and others," there is a horrible story called *Martha, the Gipsy*, about a woman who brought terrible sorrows upon the family and person of a magistrate who had cursed her for begging in the street.

In a certain Essex village, not many years ago, a Gipsy of the Lee family was held in great repute. Her curse was feared and her blessing respected. At one particular house where she used to call, the

good wife was always very careful never to offend her, and always offered her a cup of tea. All the same, she never wished her to step over the threshold, so, when she saw her coming, she would call to her little boy to run quickly and put the scissors or a table knife under the door mat, for it was thought that a Gipsy witch would never step over steel.

At another house in that same village, Gipsy Lee called one day and asked for a cup of tea. The housewife was very busy and did not want to be bothered, so refused. "All right," retorted the Gipsy, "then all your sons will wear the red coat." This struck terror into the woman's mind, so much so that she sent after the Gipsy, asking her to return and have some tea, but she would not do so, neither would she remove the curse. Strange to say, all the three sons became soldiers, and not one prospered.

Another story comes from that village, but this one is not guaranteed true in all particulars. A Gipsy called at a house where dough had just been set in a trough to rise. She asked for a small portion, and was refused. "All right," answered the Gipsy, "then all your bread will be heavy." After she had gone, the housewife, fearing that the woman had the power to interfere with the dough, called her daughter and told her of her trouble. "I'll soon settle her," said the daughter, and, taking a knife, she warmed it in the fire, and then slashed the dough backwards and forwards with it. The story goes on to say that before long the Gipsy returned in a terrible state of heat, caused by the hot steel; in fact so hot was she that she walked through the pond.

People still believe that Gipsies have the power to cause human beings and animals to be attacked by parasites. The writer knows personally of several cases. Some are those of beautiful children of whom the Romanies were supposed to be envious.

That Gipsies are not always envious nor ill wishers was evinced at a wedding the writer attended. While we were waiting outside the church for the bride to come out, someone stepped inside the porch to stop the bride in order that a photo might be taken, but a Gipsy woman called out in a loud voice, "Oh, what a pity! It is unlucky to stop a bride." The loud hint was taken—the bride was not stopped for the photographer.

The life of the average Gipsy is very hard, but they all grow accustomed to hardships, and are very strong and wiry. A lady once visited a Gipsy woman who lived in a tent in the corner of a field. The poor woman had broken her leg, and was lying on a bed in the tent, by the side of a stream of water which was flowing through a furrow in the middle of the tent. The visitor was full of pity and greatly upset over what she considered the terrible plight of the Gipsy. She went to a man she knew who was not a Gipsy born, but had married a Gipsy girl, and had become a Romany from choice. She asked if something could be done for the poor soul. The man replied, "Lady, do not upset yourself, she is all right. I dare say you think the mole has a hard time of it, but he is accustomed to his surroundings. This Gipsy woman is accustomed to hers. She will

get better far more quickly if you leave her where she is. See what has happened to our people who have been taken to Infirmaries—they have been kindly treated, but killed. Leave her where she is.'' The Gipsies, like the wild birds, soon die in captivity.

But the Gipsies themselves are often good doctors' and very kindly in passing on remedies to other than their own folks. A Gipsy once called at a cottage, and found the little family in great distress. The mother, who was a widow, had been told by the doctor that she must go to hospital, as he feared she had diphtheria. Naturally, she was greatly upset and was wondering what would become of her little children, who were screaming and clinging to her. The Gipsy calmed them, saying there was no need to go to the hospital. ''Just gargle your throat,'' she said, ''with vinegar and water, as hot as you can bear it.'' The sufferer did this, with the result that whatever it was in the throat broke, and relief was thus soon gained.

Another case of kindly help occurred in the same Essex town, but whether it was performed by a Gipsy, I am not certain, though rather think it was. A resident was suffering from diphtheria and had been given up by the doctor. A man, hearing of this, asked to be allowed to see the patient. He got a clay pipe, filled it with tar, placed it in hot coals and then sent the smoke down the sufferer's throat. This brought away fungus-looking stuff, and he recovered.

An old writer says that the flower Gipsy-wort was so called "because the rogues and runagates which call themselves Egyptians do colour themselves black with this herb."

In spite of all the cunning and roguery of the Romanies, there is something romantic and fascinating about them. "Didacoyes," we Essex folk call them, and the most romantic holiday we can think of is a caravan trip—in imitation of the Romany Folk.

CHIGWELL AND CHIGWELL ROW

D. W. COLLER, in his *History of Essex*, says, "Chigwell is generally regarded as one of the sweetest villages in the County. It abounds in beautiful woodland scenery, extending in several parts along the verge of the forest; and from Chigwell Row, which forms a neat little village of itself, a fine view opens over the County up to Danbury Church, the spire of which is distinctly visible, and along a great part of the Thames, backed by the rising hills of Kent. The parish is thickly studded with good mansions, most of them country residences of merchants and others of the Metropolis; and there are several good old halls and manor houses in which dwelt the ancient lords of the soil."

Earl Harold, afterwards King Harold, was one of these ancient "lords of the soil," the Manor of Chigwell Hall being his property.

Philip Morant, in his *History of Essex*, tells of the ancient family of de Sandford, who owned the Manor of Wolverston. It was granted to the family by Henry the Second, "to hold by grand sergeancy, viz., of finding a damsel to wait in the Queen's chamber on her coronation day."

Alice, the heiress of the de Sandfords, lived in the time when all women owners of property were obliged to marry. The king sold her wardship in the year

1248 to Fulk Basset, Bishop of London. He sold it to Hugh de Vere, of Heddingham Castle, Earl of Oxford, "for five years whether she lived or died." De Vere married the heiress to his eldest son.

The royal hunting lodge known as Potteles, or Langford Place, "perhaps as ancient as anything in the Forest," was held by Henry the Eighth, and Edward the Sixth. It seems to have been in that part of the parish which is now a district in itself, and is called Buckhurst Hill. Morant says that the Abbey of Stratford "had in this parish and Woodford, a tenement and curtilage called Buckhurst, *alias* Monkenhall." Buckhurst belonged to Walter Writell in 1475.

The Manor of Barrington or Rolls was owned by Eliab Harvey, brother to Dr. William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood. Eliab married Emma Skinner, or Skynner as it was written then, daughter of Stephen Skynner of Walthamstow. This Stephen Skynner inherited the Manor of Bishops Court, Lambourne, which was later sold to the Lockwood family. Morant speaks in praise of Emma Skynner. Her son was Admiral Sir Eliab Harvey.

The name Chigwell, we are told, means Kings well. There is difference of opinion as to whether Chigwell or Chigwell Row supplies the well which gave rise to the name. Some think it was the medicinal well at Chigwell Row, "behind the windwill among the trees." Doctor Freuen, born in an old mansion on the Row, now pulled down, thought very highly

of the water from this well. Others think the name arose from a well at the beginning of Vicarage Lane, Chigwell. This well is now covered over, but the water trickles down the bank into the road. Evidence seems to prove that the well was the one at Chigwell Row. An old inhabitant possessed a very old book on Essex, which gave the history of place names; among them this was mentioned as the King's Well in *Hainault* Forest. The possessor of the book showed me where the old well is. His father bricked it in. He farmed that particular piece of land and was greatly bothered by people trampling over his corn to get at the well. The well is near the mill pond and can be reached from what is now a private road, but at one time was a right of way into the Forest of Hainault. The water from the well varied—when it was of a yellowish tinge it was bad for cattle. There was a gate across the top of Vicarage Lane and a hut where the gate keeper lived.

The vicars of Chigwell have been many and varied, but several learned and saintly men have been numbered among them. John Rogers, the first martyr to suffer under Mary's persecution, was vicar for a short time. It is interesting to note how Chigwell figures in the history of our English Bible. John Rogers was sent out to Antwerp as chaplain to the Merchant Adventurers. There he met Tyndall and Coverdale, and helped them with the translation of the Bible. Rogers was martyred in 1554. His grandson Thomas was on board *The Mayflower*. He took with him a portrait of his

grandfather, which is now in the Museum of Worcester, New England. Archbishop Harsneth, born at Colchester in 1561, became vicar of Chigwell in 1597, and was made Archdeacon of Essex in 1609. He is buried in the Church. His epitaph, which he composed himself, is as follows:—

> "Here lieth Samuel Harsneth, formerly vicar of this Church. First the unworthy Bishop of Chichester, then the more unworthy Bishop of Norwich, at last the most unworthy Bishop of York."

The Archbishop of York left his library to his native town of Colchester, but for Chigwell (to which place he seemed much attached) he endowed two schools—English and Latin. He ordained that the school masters were to be neither Papists nor Puritans—"No tipplers, haunters of alehouses, nor puffers of tobacco." The masters were not to hit the boys on the head on pain of a fine of 40s. for every offence. I am told that a modern master used to stand at the door every morning as the boys came into school and pull every boy's ear, saying that if he did not need it before going in he would before coming out! Perhaps this was to get over the difficulty of not being allowed to hit them on the head!

Roger Fenton was vicar from 1606 to 1615. He, with John Overall, Edward Lively, vicar of Purleigh, Rodger,* brother of Lancelot Andrews, Bishop of

* David's *Annals of Nonconformity in Essex*. Benton in his *History of the Rochford Hundred*, says the Andrews family owned a farm at Rawreth and the advowson of the Church.

Winchester (Rodger was thought to have been vicar of Chigwell for a short period prior to Fenton), and John Spencer, was engaged upon the preparation of the Authorised Version of the Bible which appeared in 1611.

William Paley, author of *Evidences of Christianity*, was vicar for a short time about 1770 (*"Greater London," Vol.* 1, 452).

The most famous scholar of the Chigwell Grammar School was of course William Penn. He was born near the Tower of London, but when under a year old was brought to live at Wanstead. He owed much to the influence of the school, which it would seem added to his deep religious impressions. It will be remembered that as the peaceful founder of Pennsylvania—carrying no firearms—he had no trouble whatever with the Indians.

Another famous scholar was James Smith, joint author of *The Rejected Addresses*, but more of him anon.

*The curious old custom or ceremony of the Wardstaff was observed at Chigwell. The Staff was cut from a wood in Abbess Roothing. It was taken to the Lord of the Manor at Rookwood Hall† special ceremonies being observed. It then went to Fyfield, where the watch was kept over it "at the cross with the hand at the Three Wants." From

* Morant gives full descriptions in Vol. I. of his *History of Essex*, p.126.

† Rookwood Hall and Abbess Hall were both in the possession of Stephen Skynner in 1739.

Lambourne it came to Chigwell after being kept watch over at "a cross in the middle of the town of Abridge." At Chigwell the watch was kept at the cross before the church. It was then under the care of the Lord of the Manor of Loughborough. The Wardstaff was carried in a load of straw from Lambourne to Abridge by armed watchers, the cart being drawn by six horses. Bartlett, in his *History of Essex*, says that "the Manor of Deux Hall in Abridge was held of the Duke of Buckingham by fealty and rent of 2s. called Ward Silver, and doing the Duke White Service at the Wardstaff in Ongar Hundred."

The Manor of Lambourne was also held by Ward Service. The observance of this quaint custom seems to have been made a time for a kind of inspection of men able to carry arms. The Wardstaff represented the king's person, but strange to say it was at last thrown into the sea!

Another quaint custom which was continued late in the nineteenth century was the Fairlop Procession already described under Epping Forest and its Associations. On the Sunday after the first Friday in July a Fair was held on the grass opposite the old "Bald Hind." It was a very rowdy time, the fair folk being the roughest of their kind from London. Mrs. Skinner, the writer's mother, used to hold a service for these Fair people in the adjacent forest. This exodus from London it seems was put an end to, not by law, but by an "Act of God." A terrible thunderstorm overwhelmed them on their last journey when they were about the neighbourhood

of Fulwell Hatch. The experience seemed to have been so terrifying that they never ventured more.

The "Bald Hind" where this Sunday Fair* was held was at the top of Grange Hill and at the corner of Hainault Road. A strip of grass still remains. Not far away there is a large farm called Grange Farm. Morant says this farm was once a hamlet in itself, but one thinks the hamlet was more likely to have been the cluster of houses around the "Bald Hind," (some were pulled down of late). The Manor of Grange belonged to Tiltey Priory.†

We all know of the love that Charles Dickens had for Chigwell, but one cannot refrain from quoting the famous Forster letter in which Dickens wrote: "Chigwell, my dear fellow, is the greatest place in the world. Name your day for going. Such a delicious old inn opposite the churchyard—such a lovely ride—such beautiful forest scenery—such an *out of the way* rural place—such a sexton! I say again name your day."

I believe it is now generally accepted that Dickens had two inns in mind when describing "The Maypole" in *Barnaby Rudge*—"The King's Head"

* Chigwell Fair, for the Hiring of Servants, was held in old times on September 30th.

† Morant calls it Granges or Barns. He gives a very interesting note in Vol. II., p. 436, on the name Grange. He says:—"The Cistercians or White Monks had Granges that is Barns in several places; and the reason of it was that the lands they held in their own hands being discharged of tithes by Pope Paschall II. and Hadrian IV., therefore, in order to cheat the secular clergy, that is the incumbents of Churches, of the tithes, they held most of their lands in their own hands, and had large Barns or Granges to lay up their crops in."

at Chigwell, to which he invited Forster, and the old inn at Chigwell Row, called "The Maypole." This latter was older as an inn than "The King's Head." It is marked on the map in Morant's *History of Essex* (the 1816 edition), while no mention is made of "The King's Head." Dickens is quite right when he says in *Barnaby Rudge* that the old house at Chigwell had not always been an inn. It was once a ladies' school. It is very ancient, and Forest Courts were held there till the time of George III. The original "King's Head" is a few yards down the road, and now forms a part of the stables. On an old bow window one may see the legend, "Ye Olde King's Head."

Much of *Barnaby Rudge* was written at "The King's Head." The chimneys and gables described in the story answer to that inn, while the cellars and porch are those of "The Maypole" at Chigwell Row. There was also in front of this latter inn an ash tree which formed "The Maypole," and stood there in the memory of some still living. The "Maypole" is now a private house which goes by the name of "The Old Maypole." An ugly public house called "The Maypole" has been built in front of the old inn, on what was once the village green. On this green, in 1841, used to stand the coaches which ran to London and which were owned by Mrs. Sophia Powling.

There are in existence some relics from the old "Maypole" when it was an inn—some knives or daggers which were taken from Dick Turpin's cave,

THE OLD MAYPOLE

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some books, glass and china. There used to be also a stool made from the old Fairlop Oak.

George Shillibeer, who in 1829, introduced the first omnibus into London, lived at "The Grove," Chigwell Row. The lane besides the grounds is called "Shillibeer Lane." It is said that another of his good deeds was to help to secure for the people that beautiful piece of woodland now called the Recreation Ground at Chigwell Row, in which there is row upon row of fine hornbeam trees.

There have been some quaint characters at Chigwell Row. It is said that the model of Gainsborough's picture, *The Woodcutter*, was a Chigwell Row woodsman. But *the* character of the district was "Dido," the Hainault Forest hermit. His real name was not generally known. Supposed to be of good family and to be supplied with a little money, he lived in a kind of tent in the Forest, until the London County Council took it over. Then "Dido" and the gypsies were all cleared off, so "Dido" took up his abode in a corner of a field in Vicarage Lane.

He was very clever at making herbal medicines and ointments, which cured whooping cough, measles, back-ache, liver troubles, burns, etc. He used to say that the liver was the kitchen of the body, and if the kitchen was in disorder the whole house was upset. From a fern, "Dido" made a green ointmen which was very highly spoken of. One winter the driver of the 'bus, which ran once a day from Lambourne to Woodford, had chilblains so badly that he could not hold the reins. This green ointment was applied and each finger bound up, with the

result that in two days he could drive again. The secret of this ointment is lost. "Dido" promised to tell a friend how it was made, but did not do so. He said that the fern was getting very scarce—the only place left where he could find it was Loughton.

When some families were stricken with scarlet fever and diphtheria, "Dido" was the only man who would go near them. He went every day to see if he could fetch food or other necessaries.

He used to gather sloe and hawthorn leaves, dry them and break them up small, then take them to London, where he said he sold them to tea merchants. "You don't know what you are taking when you drink China tea," he used to say. "Dido" also took to London ferns and wild birds which he had trapped in the forest. Starting at three in the morning, he would walk to Bunhill Row, and, after disposing of his load, would tramp all the way back to Hainault Forest. " 'Dido' can do it," he used to say, "he can beat the young folks yet." Someone poisoned his dog. He said he thought it was done by someone who wanted to rob him, thinking he had money.

"Dido" was an educated man who it was thought had occupied a good position. Some think he may have been a medical student. Why he called himself "Dido" is not known. Perhaps, like Queen Dido in classic story, he had been deserted by love and was inconsolable.

* * * * * *

Although Chigwell is so near London, it is very much what it was many years ago. It is so near

"DIDO"

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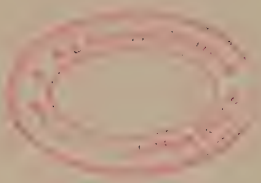


that St. Paul's and the Crystal Palace may be seen from Grange Hill on a clear day, while at night "the lights o' London" are a sight worth seeing. Yet Vicarage Lane, Gravel Lane, and Millars Lane are still some of the prettiest lanes one could wish to see.

James Smith has left us a description of Chigwell in his poem, *Chigwell Revisited after Fifty Years*. The route he took was up Vicarage Lane to Grange Hill; then, turning to the left, where the grass is still beside the road as he describes, he went along Chigwell Row till he came to Gravel Lane, near the corner of which stands "The Old Maypole."

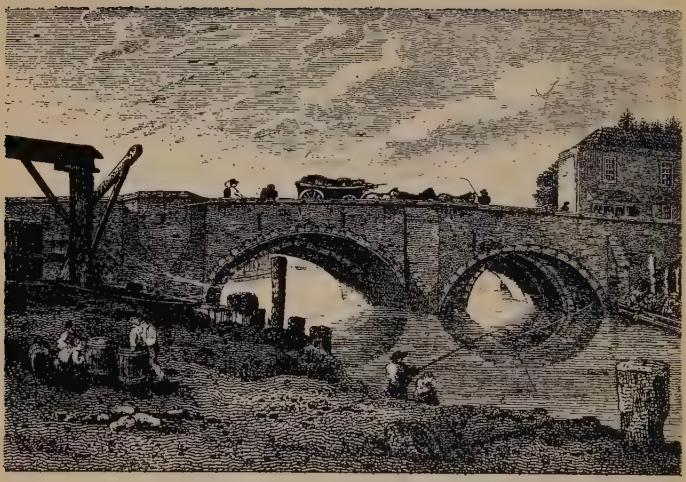
Going down Gravel Lane, he came to the main road from Chigwell to Abridge. He turned to the right and visited Abridge, and then returned along the main road to Chigwell, passing Barringtons, once the home of Sir Eliab Harvey.

"I pass the vicar's white abode,
And pondering take the upward road,
By busy thoughts o'erladen,
To where the pride of Chigwell Row
Still lives—a handsome widow now,
As erst a lovely maiden.

Here hills and dales and distant Thames,
And forest glens, green proof proclaims,
Of nature's lavish bounty,
And dub thee, lofty region still,
Surrey's tall foe, the Richmond Hill
Of this our Eastern County.

Diverging from the road, the sod
I tread which once, a boy, I trod,
With pace not quite so nimble.
But where's the Maypole next the lane,
Who dared to banish from the plain
That wreath encircled symbo ?

Abridge, her tank and waterfall,
The path beneath Sir Eliab's wall
I once again am stepping.
Beyond that round we rarely stirred;
Loughton we saw—but only heard
Of Ongar and of Epping."



THE ANCIENT BRIDGE, BOW

STRATFORD LANGTHORN

STRATFORD is divided into two parts by Bow Bridge. That part which is on the Middlesex side is called Stratford-le-Bow, so named, it is said, after the shape of the bridge, which was the first to be built in the form of a bow. The original bridge was built by Queen Maud or Matilda, wife of Henry I, as, when making pilgrimage to "Our Lady of Berkinge," the royal lady had the unhappy experience of being "well washed" in the river Lea, when crossing by the way of the Old Ford.

Stow, in his famous *Survey of London*, gives us an interesting account of this bridge and its builder. He says, "This Matilda when she saw the way to be dangerous . . . caused two stone bridges to be builded. Of the which one was situated over Lue at the head of the town of Stratford, now called Bow, a rare piece of work; for before the time the like had never been seen in England. The other over the little brooke, commonly called Chavelse Bridge. She made the king's highway of gravel between the two bridges." He then goes on to tell that the Queen gave to the Abbess of Barking certain manors, and a mill at Stratford, called "Wiggon Mill," for the upkeep of the bridges. These were afterwards sold by the Abbess of Barking to the Abbot of Stratford, he being then supposed

to look after the repairs, but Stow says he "at length laid the charges upon one Hugh Pratt, who lived near the bridges and causeway, allowing him certain loaves of bread daily. And by the alms of passengers he kept them in due repair; as did his son William after him, who by the assistance of Robert Passelewe, Chief Justice in the time of Henry III. obtained these tolls . . . of every cart carrying corn, wood, coal, etc., one penny; of one carrying tasel, two pence; and one carrying a dead Jew, eightpence; and put up a bar with locks, on Lockebreggs. But Philip Basset, and the Abbot of Waltham, having broke the bar rather than pay Tolls, the bridges and causeway remained unrepaired. In the meantime, Eleanor, Queen of King Henry III. caused them to be mended at her own charge by William, the keeper of her chapel."

Miss Catherine Fry (daughter of Mrs. Elizabeth Fry) says in her book on *West and East Ham* that on the original bridge stood a chapel, said to be dedicated to Saint Catherine, who would have been the patron saint of the river Lea. At one time it seems the Bridge Master of London Bridge had power over the river Lea. The old singing game, "London Bridge is broken down," has variations of the rhyme, and one version introduces the river Lea :

"London Bridge is broken down,
Dance o'er my Lady Lee,
London Bridge is broken down
With a gay lady."

The refrain, "Dance o'er my Lady Lee," occurs in every verse.

There is in Hone's *Every Day Book* a very interesting account of a Rogation Tide Procession, in which the Stratford folks took part. "During the week there was a procession from the Tower of London —priests, clerks, and the lieutenant and his men. The axe of the Tower was borne in procession and the waits attended. There joined in this procession the inhabitants of St. Katherines, Radcliff, Limehouse, Stratford, Bow, Shoreditch, and all that belonged to the Tower with their halberts."

Chaucer speaks of Stratford atte Bow in his *Canterbury Tales*. In describing a Prioress, who was one of the pilgrims, he says:—

"Frensh she spak ful fayre and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe.
For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe."

The part of Stratford on the Essex side of the river was called Stratford Langthorn. Morant thinks the name might have originated from some remarkable long thorn which grew there, or from the general size of the thorn bushes in the near woods. It might well have been so, as Essex has been, and still is, noted for its hawthorn trees. Then again, the old English word for lantern was lanthorn; this name perhaps had originally the same meaning, a longthorn, as lanterns were carried on long sticks.

Wever, in his *Funeral Monuments*, published in 1631, gives us a pleasing picture of Stratford. He tells us that going over the bridge towards West Ham he saw "the remains of a Monastery pleasantly watered about with several streams, and the meadows near the mills were planted with willows." Camden, who wrote about the year 1586, describes the Lea at Stratford as "divided into three streams, it washes the green meadows and makes them look very charming."*

Sometimes the Essex side was called Stratford Langton. This, Morant says, might have been from the length of the street or town, strat meaning street. The word ford, of course, always denoted a crossing over a river: Ilford—the bad ford or crossing, Woodford—the ford by the wood or wooden bridge, Chingford—the ford over the Ching, etc.

Will Kemp, the Morris Dancer, in his *Nine Dayes Wonder*, calls the town Stratford Langton. It will be remembered that he set out to dance from London to Norwich. His experiences at Bow and Stratford are very interesting. He tells us that many people followed him from London and came to Stratford-le-Bow, where it was the custom to partake of cake and cream. He says, "many a thousand brought me to Bow where I rested from dancing, but had small rest from those who would have dragged me to drinking. But I warrant you Will Kemp was wise enough! To their full cups, kind thanks was my return . . . Tickle it, good Tom (Tom was the musician), we follow thee; farewell Bowe, have

* Morant's *History of Essex*.

over the bridge where I heard say Honest Conscience was once drowned. It's a pity if it was so . . . lets along to Stratford Langton. Many good fellows being there met and knowing how well I loved the sports, had prepared a bear-bayting; but so unreasonable were the multitudes of people that I could only hear the Beare roare and the dogges howle; therefore forward I went with my hey de gaies to Ilford, where I again rested, and was by the people of the town and country there about very welcomed; being offered carouses in the great spoon, one whole draught being able that time to draine my little wit drye; but being afraid of the old proverb—He had need of a long spoon that eats with the devill—I soberly gave my boon companions the slip."

There were several mills at Stratford Langthorn. We have a reminder of one in Windmill Lane, near Stratford station. Most of them, though, were water mills. We have already referred to one—Wiggon Mill. Miss Fry tells us there was one called Sayens Mill (now the City Mills). This had the willow trees around it. Another was called Spilemans, a Fullers Mill. This had four acres of meadow land. St. Thomas' Mill belonged to the Hospital of St. Thomas in Cheapside, at which Thomas à Becket born. The Abbey Mills lay between the two branches of the Chanelsea river.

Stratford Abbey, or West Ham Abbey, was founded by William de Montfitchet in 1135.* It continued as a Monastery until the time when Henry VIII

* Morant's *History of Essex*.

turned his greedy eyes upon the religious houses, and this, with others, was despoiled by that tyrant.

The family of Montfitchet was a famous one. Robert Gernon, the founder, owned a part of the Manor of West Ham, which was given to the Abbey. Coller, in his *History of Essex*, says that a member of this family (which had taken its name from their stronghold at Stansted—Mountfitchet) "led a band of Essex men to take part in the glorious work of laying the corner stone of English liberty in the time of King John."

Richard de Montfitchet procured a charter for a market in West Ham in 1253, but "this ancient market charter became obsolete."*

Stratford bread has been famous. Stow, in his *Survey of London*, tells us that "Roger Ackley, Mayor of London in 1512 and in the 3rd of Henry VIII., when he entered the mayoralty there was not found one hundred quarters of wheat in all the garners of the city; through which scarcity, when the carts of Stratford came laden with bread to the city, there was such a press about them, that one man was ready to destroy another in striving to be served for their money." He goes on to tell how this Mayor altered the bad state of affairs in London, and then adds—"Because I have here before spoken of the bread carts coming from Stratford-at-the-Bow, ye shall understand that of old time the bakers of bread at Stratford were allowed to bring daily, except the Sabbath and principal feasts, divers long carts laden with bread, the same being two ounces

* Coller's *History of Essex*.

in the penny wheat loaf heavier than the penny wheat loaf baked in the city, the same to be sold in Cheap, three or four carts standing there between Gutherons Lane and Fausters Lane end, one cart on Cornhill, by the conduit of Grass Street." But Stow also tells of an ancient Stratford baker who got into disgrace over his bread. "I have read," he says, "that in the fourth year of Edward II, Richard Riffeham being Mayor, a baker named John of Stratford, for making bread less than the assize, was with a fool's hood on his head,and loaves of bread about his neck, drawn on a hurdle through the streets of the city."

Henry VIII gave the Abbey of Stratford Langthorn to Peter Meautis in 1538. This family is mentioned in the chapter on Gidea Hall. It is said that the aged Countess of Salisbury resided in the Abbey, she who was so brutally murdered by order of Henry VIII, simply because she was of royal blood. Lady Margaret de Vere also lived here. The old gateway is all that is left of the Abbey.

In a bound volume of *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, there is, under the date of February 6th, 1834, an account of Stratford new church (St. John's). The writer first tells about the parish of West Ham generally, and says it was divided into three wards—Plaistow, West Ham and Stratford. In the first ward he had visited the house of Burke, "the foremost man of his age." He continues, "We now come to the ward or hamlet of Stratford, a populous district of which the new

church forms a conspicuous and ornamental feature, being situated on a triangular plot formed by the divergence of the road in the directions of Romford and Woodford."

It must be strange for the young folks of Stratford to think of their crowded neighbourhood of to-day as a hamlet!

On the triangular piece of ground just mentioned also stands the Stratford Martyrs Memorial. The Roll of Honour is as follows:—(Fox's *Acts and Monuments of the Martyrs*).

Elizabeth Warne (widow),	burnt July 1555.
Stephen Harwood	,, Aug. ,,
Henry Adlington (sawyer)	,, June 27, 1556.
Laurence Parman (smith)	,, ,, ,,
Henry Wye (brewer)	,, ,, ,,
William Hallywel (smith)	,, ,, ,,
George Searles (tailor)	,, ,, ,,
Edmund Hurst (labourer)	,, ,, ,,
Lyon Cawch (broker)	,, ,, ,,
Ralph Jackson (servant)	,, ,, ,,
John Routh (labourer)	,, ,, ,,
John Derifall (labourer)	,, ,, ,,
Elizabeth Pepper	,, ,, ,,
Agnes George	,, ,, ,,

The names of Hugh Laverock, a cripple, and John Aprice, a blind man, are given for Stratford-le-Bow, suffering martyrdom on May 15th, 1556.

* * * * * *

Where Stratford Town Hall now stands, there were cottages and flower gardens. In fact, Stratford

WHERE THE STRATFORD TOWN HALL NOW STANDS

was noted for its flowers as well as for its bread. London folks used to walk out to Stratford to enjoy and buy flowers. It was a noted place for roses, as was also Forest Gate.* West Ham Lane, by the side of the Town Hall, in which is Queen Mary's Hospital for the East End, contained some old houses. Around The Green there were also some very fine houses.

There was at The Green a school kept by Mr. Freeman, who wrote *The Flora of Stratford* in 1862. He mentions 309 specimens for Stratford and district; all of these, with the exception of four, two of which were found at High Beech and two on The Isle of Dogs, were to be found within a short walk.

The Green has disappeared, but on it now stand the splendid Technical Schools, Library and Essex Museum.

* Mr. Drane, of Upton Place, Forest Gate, gave a lecture some forty years ago on "Forest Gate, Fifty Years Ago." He described the wonderful rose gardens of the neighbourhood.

BURSTEAD, BILLERICAY, AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

THE Monks of Stratford Langthorn held property at Great Burstead, so, when their Abbey was flooded by the rising of the river Lea, they fled thither and remained there till King Richard (probably the Second) repaired the damage done by the floods, and brought them back to Stratford Langthorn. Such is the story told by Leland concerning them.

The Monks owned the Manor called "Burghsted Grange"* as early as 1262. King Henry III in 1353 granted them a market and fair here, and in 1476 King Edward IV gave them a market and two fairs at Billerica (Billericay). At the dissolution of the Monasteries, the Manor of Burstead was given to Sir Richard Rich.

William the Conqueror had given the lordship of Burstead to his half brother, Odo, Bishop of Bayeaux. Morant tells us he accompanied William to England and was present at the Battle of Hastings, where he assisted by his prayers and advice. William in return heaped riches and property upon him. It will be remembered that William's wife, Matilda, the first consort in England to be called "queen", caused to be worked that famous tapestry called the Bayeaux Tapestry, on which are depicted the doings

* See Note on Granges, p. 37.

of her husband as conqueror. Odo is represented in this work. He lost his Manor of Burstead, etc., and was banished from the realm for plotting, first to become Pope, and then to overthrow William Rufus.

The Manor of White Hall in Little Burstead was in the Tyrell family. They also held St. Margaret's. The church of Little Burstead is rather isolated, standing in a pretty country lane. Morant says that the churchwardens gave away "twenty shillings to the poor at Christmas called Pancrass money; and five shillings in bread at Whitsun." There is a large Rectory and considerable grounds.

The Church at Great Burstead is much larger, and is of considerable interest. Here the godly Miles Coverdale came to preach. He, with John Rogers of Chigwell, helped Tyndale with the translation of the Bible. In fact, Coverdale was the first to translate the whole of the Bible into the English tongue. Here were married in February, 1607, Christopher Martin, single man, and Marie Prower, widow.* Christopher Martin was the man who provisioned the *Mayflower* which took the Pilgrim Fathers to New England in 1620. He is spoken of as coming from Billericay. One wishes it were known just where he lived so that the comings and goings of those stirring days, during which he was making all these momentous arrangements, could be visualized. Not only did Christopher Martin and his wife go to New England, but also Solomon Prower and John Langerman, all of Billericay.

**New Light on the Pilgrim Story* The name of Prower occurs many times in the Parish Register.

We find Christopher Martin in trouble before the Archdeacon of Essex, as recorded in the Archidiaconal Records at Chelmsford. This was usually for not sending his son to be catechised. An amusing case recorded for Great Burstead is that of Edmund Brigg, in 1615, "For causing his wyves pue dore to be locked. The congregation is often troubled by noise in unlocking the same againe in time of service by his servant a long time tampering the locke."

The Register of Great Burstead Church contains the following entry of burial:—"Elizabeth Watts, widow of Thomas Watts, the blessed martyr of God, who for witnessing suffered his martyrdom in the fires at Chelmsford the 22nd of May, in the reign of Queen Mary, was buried this tenth day of July, 1599. Having lived a widow after his death and made a good end like a good Christian woman in God." Elizabeth Watts was once cited before the Archdeacon for going out of church before the service was over, but as it was on account of illness, she was excused.

Thomas Watts, or "worthy Wattee," as he was called, was a draper in Billericay. He was arrested for his Protestant teaching in 1555. He appeared before Bonner on May 3rd, and after three examinations was condemned and sent to Newgate. On the ninth of June he was taken to Chelmsford, where he stayed at "The Old Lion" inn with four other prisoners. They had supper together and then prayer. All suffered martyrdom. Watts' wife and children went to Chelmsford to be near him, and

two of the children offered to die with him. He blessed them and charged them to obey and fear God, who he doubted not would be a merciful father unto them. "As the Lord hath given you unto me, so I give you again unto the Lord."

Not only can Billericay and Burstead boast of "Worthy Wattee", but also of three maiden martyrs, Joan Horns, Elizabeth Thackwell, and Margaret Ellis. The two former were burnt at Smithfield, May 16th, 1556. Margaret Ellis would have suffered with them had she not died in the prison of Newgate overnight. Margaret lived at Billericay; the other two at Burstead.

What stories the old mill at Billericay could tell had it a voice! Did it witness, I wonder, the rising of Wat Tyler and his men, and the fearful slaughter in the near woods, those glorious woods, so beautiful, no matter what time of year, full of colour, whether of bough, or leaf of tree, bluebells, primroses, campions, and many another flower. These woods were once stained with the blood of these slaves of the land, who, although mistaken in their methods, had just cause to rebel.

The ancient mill has been silent and unused for many a day. One regrets the passing away of these old landmarks, so picturesque in appearance and interesting to study. The story is told of one of the millers that he was a giant in size and strength. But suddenly his strength deserted him, and this depressing him very much, he sought for a remedy. He hit upon the idea of dieting himself, an almost unheard of thing in those days. He ate no flesh, nor

drank any beer or wine. He was called "The Ghastly Miller of Billericay" on this account, but his strength returned to him and he was able to lift the heavy weights as of old.

The charming village of Stock, three miles from Billericay, has a windmill which is a great landmark. In the winter time, when the trees are bare, it looks in the distance as if its great sails were combing the sky. What the picture must have been like when the two other mills that used to keep it company, standing in the same field, were working at the same time, would be difficult to describe!
Stock folk are proud of their mill with its sails of apple wood, and when on one occasion the wind broke one of the sails, the folk offered to get up a public subscription for its restoration.

It is said that Queen Boadicea had a stronghold here at Stock—a steep mound at the foot of which there is still what looks like the remains of a moat. The manse garden runs down to this moat, from which the mound looks imposing. Stock evidently was at one time in the dense part of the Forest of Essex. Its name we are told was Herward Stock, Haverd Stock, and Hertford Stock—Hereward from the keeper of the wood, and stock meaning a log or tree. Stock was evidently in ancient times a hamlet to Buttsbury. The noble families of Ferrers and Greys owned the Manors.

Morant speaks of the Common at Stock as being "pretty large." He says it "almost joins with Gallow'd (Galleywood) Common on the North and

Ramsden on the South west.'' All one can say is that Stock Common is *pretty small* nowadays!

Stock Church is quaint and beautifully situate, and of unusual type. The Rectory is interesting, for here it is said the poet Cowper wrote some of his famous hymns when on a visit to his friend, the Rev. William Unwin, the saintly Rector. Of Cowper's poem, *Tithing Day at Stock*, one does not feel like saying much, as it does not reflect much credit upon rustic manners of those days.

Stock was at one time a centre for pottery makers. There is a curious and interesting house in the village called Pottery House, while in the garden of the Georgian house called ''Brunnings and Luthers'' much pottery, both Roman and of later periods, has been found.

Stock Oak, a tree which stood on the verge of the parish where it joins that of Galleywood, unfortunately disappeared in the winter of 1927-28. It was very much decayed, and the intense frosts of that winter broke it up. While arrangements were being made to preserve it, persons came along and took away the remains of the old tree for firewood. This oak is said to have been planted by Edward VI. There is still a wonderful old oak tree in what is called the Back Lane at Stock, it is known as Hollow Lop, and its size and shape make it quite remarkable. Stock has several very ancient trees, great hawthorns and hollies in the Churchyard, and an enormous giant ash by the footpath.

Buttsbury rejoices in some queer old names. Ginges-Joibred, and Gingi Laundri are some of

them. Butsbery, or Bottesbury, is a corruption of St. Botolphs-bury. One of the Manors in this parish was called Ging-Joibred-Laundry. In 1746, Sir Thomas Tyrell held the "Manor of Tyrell in Bottisbury, and 40 acres of wood in Bottisbury, Yuggingberdlaundry and Herford Stoke of the Queen. A Mill in Stoke. A Messuage and 60 acres of arable in Stoke, called Danyels." In Bartlett's *History of Essex* we are told that there was a family of Joibreds, "for in an ancient deed without date it says that Emma, the daughter of Adam Joibred gave Robert de Frid land in the village of Ginges."

Several villages in this neighbourhood had the prefix Ging. There is Ging-Margaret, or as it is now called Margaretting. This Manor was held by Alice de Sandford, of whom we heard in the chapter on Chigwell. The de Sandfords also owned the Manor of Blackmore and the Priory. Morant tells of an old custom at Margaretting called Luppe and Lusse. Every person passing over the Green at certain periods had to pay one penny. There was a similar custom at Writtle called Leppe and Lasse, "whereby every cart which went over a part called Greenbury, except it were a cart of a nobleman, had to pay 4d. to the Lord of the Manor."

Another village to bear the prefix of Ging was Mountnessing. It was sometimes called Gyginge Mounteneye. In Saxon times, Morant tells us that part of this district was owned by two young women named Alfega and Algar. There was a Mounteney family. There was a Robert de Mounteney in 1254 at

this Manor. In the latter end of Edward the First's reign, Edmund Bacunne and his brother John seem to have held the Manor of "Bacons," for they had license "to inclose their wood of Gings within the bounds of the Forest of Essex and convert it into a park." That wood and their Manor were holden of John de Gings by the service of a fourth part of a knight's fee.

Mountnessing Church stands on a high mound, but in a lonely situation, the only house near being Mountnessing Hall. There must surely at one time have been more houses in the immediate vicinity. There is carved on one of the pillars in this Church the head of a woman with a scold's bridle in her mouth. I am given to understand there is only one other carving like it in the whole of the country. It is a reminder of those barbarous days of old in the falsely so-called "Merry England," when women were burnt as witches or ducked in muddy ponds, and when men and women were tied naked to cart tails, and whipped through towns and villages. Only by studying the past, can be realized how good are these days in which we live.

Mountnessing windmill is still keeping up good traditions of the past and is grinding the corn for daily bread. Our county is a corn-growing one, producing some of the best corn in the world, and her wind and water mills are among her most picturesque possessions.

GIDEA HALL AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS

THE original Gidea or Geddy Hall was built by Thomas Cooke, a London merchant. He was knighted in 1465 at the coronation of King Edward the Fourth's queen, the Lady Elizabeth Grey, widow of Sir John Grey, and daughter of Sir Richard Woodville and his wife, the Duchess Jaquetta of Luxembourg. Sir Thomas Cooke held the Manors of Bedford and Havering-atte-Bower of the Queen; for the former he paid as rent a red rose on June 24th.

Sir Anthony Cooke, the great-grandson of Sir Thomas, completed Geddy Hall, and made it one of the finest of the old English mansions.

Sir Anthony Cooke married Anne, daughter of Sir William Fitz William, of Gains Park, Theydon Garnon, and Milton, in Northamptonshire. Morant, in his *History of Essex*, has a note about Fitz William which shows his sturdy honesty. He was a merchant tailor and sometime servant to Cardinal Wolsey. After Wolsey's fall, Fitz William entertained him at Milton. Henry the Eighth heard of this and sent for him, asking how he "dared to entertain so great an enemy of the State." He replied that he had not done it contemptuously or wilfully, "but because he had been his master, and partly the means of his great fortune." The king was so pleased with

this answer that he knighted him, saying that he himself had few such servants.

In his will, Sir William Fitz William left fifty pounds for mending the road to Chigwell from Theydon, one hundred pounds for poor maids' marriage portions, and his debtors were to be forgiven.

Sir William's grandson, William, married Anne, daughter of Sir William Sidney, of Penshurst. Their son, William, married Winifred, daughter of Sir Walter Mildmay, of Danbury Park, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Sir Anthony and Lady Anne Cooke had a large family, some members becoming famous. Their eldest son, Richard, married Anne, daughter of Richard Cawston, of London. They had numerous children. Richard Cooke died when the youngest, Francis, was only a year old. There are extant letters of Sir Francis Bacon, who was cousin to Francis Cooke, in which he refers to the provision made for these children and especially for Francis. He speaks of "Mending young Fra: Cooke's porcion." This Francis Cooke, it is claimed, was one of the Pilgrim Fathers who sailed in the *Mayflower* in 1620.*

The second son of Sir Anthony Cooke, William, married Frances Grey, the cousin of Lady Jane Grey, both of whom were descended from Queen Elizabeth Woodville (the Lady Grey, at whose coronation Sir Thomas Cooke was knighted). Frances was

* *New Light on the Pilgrim Story*, by Rev. T. W. Mason and Mrs. Skinner.

daughter of Sir John Grey, to whom Queen Elizabeth gave the royal Dower House of Pirgo.

The daughters of Sir Anthony and Lady Cooke were famous. All these ladies were great scholars, being versed in Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Italian. Their father was co-tutor with Sir John Cheke to Prince Edward, afterwards King Edward the Sixth. It is said that what Sir Anthony taught the Prince by day, he taught his daughters by night.

Lady Jane Grey is supposed to have shared in some of these lessons, though very much younger than the Cooke sisters. It is said that Lady Jane Grey lived at one time at Pirgo, where she and the little Prince Edward were under the care of the Lady Margaret Bryan. Pirgo was a walking distance from Gidea Hall.

Mildred was the eldest daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke; she was born in 1526. She married William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, the Lord High Treasurer of England. Mildred Cooke was "a secret giver of much bounty." She used to send privately, four times a year, money to procure food for four hundred persons in prison, and in secret provided for two scholars at St. John's College, Cambridge.

She left money to help poor "tradespeople in Romford and Cheshunt."

Lord Burleigh, when writing of her to his son, speaks of her as "your matchless mother." She is buried in Westminster Abbey, as is also her daughter, the Countess of Oxford. Her son, Robert, was created Earl of Salisbury. The Lord Robert Cecil of our day is descended from Mildred Cooke.

It is told that when Lord Burleigh was dying, Queen Elizabeth went to see him at Exeter House. She was gorgeously dressed, and her head-dress, which she took good care was higher than anyone else's, was so high that she could not get through the door way. There was a moment of tense excitement, for the Queen did not think of stooping until one of Lord Burleigh's attendants made this suggestion. Elizabeth replied: "I will stoop for your master, but not for the King of Spain."*

The second daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke was Anna, born in 1528. She was appointed governess to the little Prince Edward before he was old enough for her father to be his tutor. She married Sir Nicholas Bacon, Keeper of the Great Seal to Queen Elizabeth. Anna became the mother of the great Sir Francis Bacon. Philippa, the daughter of Lady Bacon's brother, Richard, already mentioned, married Hercules Meautis, son of Peter Meautis, of West Ham Abbey. Their son, Thomas, became Secretary to his mother's cousin, Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam. Thomas married Anne, daughter of Sir Francis Bacon's half brother, Sir Nathaniel Bacon, K.B., of Culford. Philippa Cooke and Hercules Meautis also had a daughter, Jane, who married, first William Cornwallis, and then the Sir Nathaniel Bacon just mentioned. Here was a strange mix up of marriages—Thomas Meautis marrying his sister's step-daughter and his great-aunt's step-grand-daughter!

* Mrs. Strickland's *Lives of the Queens of England*.

Jemima Bacon, daughter of Sir Nicholas, married first Sir William Walegrave, of Wormingford Hall, and then Henry Killigrew, Esq. (Morant). Lady Bacon used to drive over to Rochford Hall to attend the services conducted by Lord Rich's private Chaplain. Writing to her brother-in-law, Lord Burleigh, on behalf of the persecuted nonconformist ministers, she says:—"I have profited more in the inward feeling and knowledge of God and His Holy Writ, though but in a small measure, by such sincere preaching within these seven or eight years than I did by hearing odd sermons at Powl's (St. Paul's) well nigh twenty years together. I mention this unfeignedly yea rather to excuse this my boldness to your lordship, to think upon their suit as God shall move your understanding and heart."—*The Lansdowne MSS.*

Theodore Beza dedicated his famous *Meditations* to Lady Bacon.

Elizabeth was the third daughter, born in 1529, She married, for her second husband, Lord John Russell. She had two daughters, Anne and Elizabeth. The younger one, "Bess" Russell, is called "The Heroine of the Prick of the Needle." Miss Strickland, in her *Lives of the Queens of England*, has a note about "Bess" Russell. She "danced blithely at the wedding of her sister Anne, but a fortnight later was dead. Her story is preserved at Westminster Abbey."

In answer to a letter of inquiry sent by the writer to the Dean of Westminster, the following courteous answer was received:—

"The Deanery,
Westminster, S.W.1.
2nd March, 1923.

Dear Madam,

I beg to acknowledge your note of February 27th. The facts are these:—Elizabeth Russell was born in a house within the precincts and christened in the Abbey. Her god-mother was Queen Elizabeth. She died of consumption in 1601. Dean Stanley, in his book, *The Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, Chapter III, says—'The form of her monument has bred one of the "vulgar" errors of Westminster Mythology. Her finger pointing to the skull, the emblem of mortality at her feet, had already within seventy years of her death led to the legend that she had "died of the prick of a needle," sometimes magnified into a judgment on her for working on a Sunday.'

Yours very truly,

Mrs. Mason. (*Signed*) Herbert E. Ryle."

Sir Anthony Cooke's grand-daughter, "Bess" Russell, figures in Mrs. Jarley's Waxworks in Dickens' *Old Curiosity Shop*. Little Nell, it will be remembered, was employed to point out the figures. When she pointed to Lady Elizabeth Russell, Mrs. Jarley said, "in her exhibition voice, 'this is an unfortunate Maid of Honour in the time of Queen Elizabeth, who died from pricking her finger in consequence of working upon a Sunday. Observe the blood trickling from her fingers, also the gold-eyed needle of the period with which she is at work.' "

There are in Lambeth Palace Library three letters written by Lady Elizabeth Russell, senior; one is to her nephew, Anthony Bacon, brother to Francis, and one is to her other nephew, Robert Cecil.

The fourth daughter of Sir Anthony and Lady Cooke was Katherine, born about 1530. She married Sir Henry Killigrew, who was in high favour with Queen Elizabeth.

Sir Anthony Cooke and Sir John Cheke were both staunch supporters of Lady Jane Grey, and when disaster came to her cause, they were both thrown into the Tower of London. They were set at liberty later, but thinking it unsafe to remain in the country, they fled to Holland, where they attended the lectures of the eminent Peter Martyr. They returned to their homes when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne.

Lord Burleigh was on Lady Jane Grey's Council, but managed to make matters right for himself with Queen Mary.

The Royal Dower House of Pirgo, where Lady Jane Grey is said to have lived, was granted by Elizabeth to Henry Grey, the father of Frances Grey, who married William Cooke. This Sir Henry Grey sold it to Sir Thomas Cheke, grandson of the famous Sir John Cheke. This Sir Thomas Cheke married the Lady Essex Rich, of Rochford Hall, daughter of Robert, Earl of Warwick.

The grounds of Gidea Hall have been made into a public park, and the present Georgian mansion* into a sports club. The original house was noted for its inscriptions in Greek and Hebrew, one of the latter being, "With God's help."

* This present Hall was built by Mr. Richard Benyon about 1746. In 1918 it was in the possession of Mr. G. Black.

ESSEX AND LADY JANE GREY

Lady Jane Grey had great connection with Essex; not only did her family own estates in the County, but several prominent Essex men were supporters of her cause. We have seen that Sir Anthony Cooke and Sir John Cheke were thrown into prison on her account. Henry Bourchier, Earl of Essex, was stripped of his estates, "Althorpe Roothing and elsewhere in Essex," as also was Lord Parr of Stanstead Hall. Sir John Gates of Sailing was executed with the Earl of Northumberland, and his estates seized by the Crown. Queen Mary gave his Manor of Runwell, near Wickford, to Susan Tonge, her first Lady of the Bedchamber. Susan was daughter of Richard White, of Hutton, and Maud, daughter of Sir John Tyrell, of Heron.

Perhaps the most interesting person to get into trouble for supporting Jane's cause was Edwin Sands, Archbishop of York, and Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, where he proclaimed the Lady Jane as Queen. His story is romantic and thrilling, and he himself was a wonderful personality, having a fascinating and mesmeric influence. He was thrown into prison for proclaiming Queen Jane, but his several jailers became his devoted attendants, one of them saying he was ready to die with him. The Archbishop escaped from prison through the kindly

help of a constable who was also a hosier, having made him a pair of stockings while in the Tower. The hosier planned his escape by night. Dr. Sands came into Essex to his step-father at Woodham Ferrers, but he had not been there two hours before word came that the guard would apprehend him that night. So he went to a farmer's near the coast and then to the house of a ship master named Mawer, at Milton Shore,* where he stayed two days. Fox tells us his story in his *Acts and Monuments of the Martyrs*, and says that his presence becoming known, Dr. Sands made up his mind to throw himself on the mercy of the people of Milton Shore. They all took his part. Between forty and fifty mariners resorted to him to hear him preach, and said they would sooner die than he should be taken.

The ship master and his wife with whom he stayed had no children, but when Dr. Sands said good-bye to Mrs. Mawer he gave her a fine handkerchief as a keepsake, and told her that ere a year should pass she would have a son (this came to pass). Dr. Sands escaped from Milton Shore in a vessel just as Queen Mary's soldiers arrived to arrest him.

Edwin Sands lived to return to England, and built a house at Woodham Ferrers which stands to-day and is called Edwin's Hall. Fox speaks of Woodham Ferrers as being in "the wilds of Essex."

Fox tells us also about Cecilia, the wife of Dr. Sands, saying "she was a gentlewoman in mind as well as body." She is buried in Woodham Ferrers Church.

* Milton Hamlet and Milton Shore were that part of Southend-on-Sea now called Cliff Town.

Lady Jane Grey's family owned the Manor of Woodham Ferrers, as also that of Stebbing and many others in Essex. The word Ferrers was taken from the name of the family who once owned Woodham. In 1445 Elizabeth Ferrers inherited this Manor from her grandfather, Lord Ferrers, of Groby and Bradgate Hall, Leicestershire. She married Sir Edward Grey of Ruthin. Sir Edward took her grandfather's title. Their son, Sir John Grey, married the beautiful Elizabeth Woodville, daughter of Sir Richard Woodville and the Duchess Jaquetta of Luxembourg. Sir John was killed in the cruel War of the Roses, and his widow after some time married the King, Edward the Fourth. Lady Jane Grey was descended from Elizabeth Woodville on both her father's and mother's side. Sir John Grey and Elizabeth Woodville had a son, Thomas, created Earl of Huntingdon, and Marquis of Dorset, by his step-father, King Edward the Fourth. This Thomas had a son of the same name who had a large family: a son John, to whom Queen Elizabeth gave the royal dower house of Pirgo; Anne, who married Sir Thomas Willoughby, of Woolston Hall, Notts; Elizabeth, married to Sir Thomas Audley, of Audley End; but the eldest was Henry, who married Frances Brandon, daughter of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, and Mary Tudor, sister of Henry the Eighth, and widow of Louis the Twelfth of France. Henry Grey and Frances Brandon had three daughters, Jane, Catherine, and Mary. Lady Jane's mother, Frances Brandon, being descended from Elizabeth Woodville and King Edward IV, and her father

being a descendant from Elizabeth Woodville by her first marriage, made the link with the beautiful and tragic Queen Elizabeth Woodville double.

Morant, in his *History of Essex*, to which we are indebted for so many details of the Essex family histories, doubts whether Lady Jane Grey's father ever owned the Manor of Woodham Ferrers, because at the time of his execution the Manor was the property of his brother-in-law, the great Sir Thomas Audley. But that is no proof; the Manor may have been taken from Henry Grey on his arrest and given to Sir Thomas. It had been the property of the other eldest sons, so why not his?

Lady Jane Grey's grandmother, Mary Tudor, was the second wife of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. His fourth wife outlived him. She was Catherine Willoughby, daughter of Mary Willoughby D'Ersby, the devoted Lady in Waiting to Queen Catherine of Aragon. Miss Strickland, in her *Lives of the Queens of England*, gives the story of Mary Willoughby. She was a near relative of Catherine of Aragon, and came over with her from Spain on her marriage to Arthur, Prince of Wales. When her second husband, Henry the Eighth, had cruelly banished her to Kimbolton Castle, Mary Willoughby took the long journey in bitter weather and great hardships in order to be with her royal mistress in her captivity.

After the death of Lady Jane Grey's grandfather, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, his widow (Catherine Willoughby) married a private gentleman named Mr. Richard Berty. They had both become

Protestants, and therefore got into trouble. Catherine had offended Bishop Gardiner, so Fox tells us in his *Acts and Monuments*. This was in the time of her first husband. At a party given by Charles Brandon, she chose Gardiner, when playing a game, as the one she liked the least. This was not forgotten by that Prelate. Gardiner was on her track when she and Mr. Berty became Protestants, so that they had to fly from the country. Mr. Berty went to the Continent first, his wife following later. She escaped from the Port of Leigh-on-Sea, which Fox, in his quaint way, said "'was at the land's end.'' Catherine stayed at the house of a man named Gosling. The dowager Duchess had with her her infant daughter, " a rider of horses, a joyner, a brewer, a fool, one of the kitchen, a gentlewoman, and a laundress.'' They managed to escape to the Continent, and after great hardships she and her husband were received by the King of Poland, and an earldom was given to Mr. Berty.

It is said that Lady Jane Grey's mother, who was another dowager Duchess of Suffolk at the same time as Catherine Willoughby (as on the death of her father, Charles Brandon, who left no sons, her husband, Henry Grey, took her father's title of Duke of Suffolk), experienced absolute destitution after the execution of her husband, and married her equerry, Adrian Stokes. Jane's two sisters, Catherine and Mary, both met with tragic fates. They were both made prisoners by Queen Elizabeth and billeted, as was the wont of Elizabeth with highborn prisoners, upon the nobility. Catherine

for a time was in the care of Sir William Petre at Ingatestone Hall, while Mary was put under the jailorship of Sir Thomas Gresham. The Greys were a tragic family, and these hapless sisters deserve the pity of all tender-hearted folk.

Lady Jane Grey is perhaps the most beloved character in English history. Certainly one of the most grievously wronged, beautiful, precocious, but withal of a gentle spirit—the victim of her family's ambitions, forced against her will into accepting the Crown of England by her father, mother, and father-in-law, she paid the penalty with her life in her eighteenth year. Fuller, in his *Book of Worthies*, describes her thus:—"She had the birth of a princess, the learning of a divine, the life of a saint, yet died the death of a malefactor for the offences of her parents."

Another writer has said of her, "we may humbly infer that she is now a star of the first magnitude in the Kingdom of her Father, since she had all the characteristics for a glorious immortality."

CHELMSFORD AND DISTRICT.

In late Victorian days Chelmsford was looked upon as a sleepy, conservative old town, where social barriers were carried to extremes, but to-day it is a go-a-head, prosperous place, boasting enterprise and invention, and known throughout the world as the place where some of the first wireless experiments were made.

Chelmsford and the surrounding places have played an important part in history, contributing very largely to the band of men and women who helped to found New England. At the Cathedral Church, Thomas Hooker used to preach. This noted divine was a very wise counsellor, and it was by his help that the laws of New England were made. Hooker was in trouble in this country for his religious opinions, and was summoned to appear before Laud. A petition on his behalf was signed by most of the Essex clergy. He made his escape to Holland; returning to England, he was nearly captured, but was fortunate enough to escape again. He then set sail for America.

Thomas Hooker had a boys' school at Little Baddow, where he was assisted by John Eliot, who afterwards became the first missionary to the North American Indians. John Eliot was born at Nazing, in Essex, and not at Wedford, Herts, as some have

declared. Hooker had a great influence upon his young assistant, and helped him to become the man he was in after years. When Eliot went to America, he took twenty-eight Nazing families with him. He lived to be eighty years old, and on the day of his death was found teaching an Indian child. When asked why he was not resting, he replied, " Because I have prayed to God to make me useful in my sphere, and He has heard my prayer; for that I can no longer preach, He leaves me strength to teach this poor child his alphabet." This noble-hearted teacher had translated the Bible into the language of the Indians. His friend, Thomas Hooker, wrote several books, among them being one written in 1638, *The Soul's Exaltation, Sold at the Black Bear, St. Paul's Churchyard.*

Among others who went to New England from the Chelmsford district was one Pynchon, a farmer from Springfield. There are, in America to-day, many Springfields named after Pynchon's home. There was a de Springfield family in the time of Edward the First. Richard de Springfield married Beatrice Marescall, the heiress of " Badew" (Baddow).

Chelmsford has a link with Harvard University. The founder, John Harvard, came on his mother's side from the Rogers family, whose old home was the ancient house in Moulsham Street called Friars Place. Catherine Rogers married three times, her first husband being Robert Harvard, the Southwark butcher. The Chelmsford Rogers are said to be closely related to John Rogers, the martyr mentioned in the chapter on Chigwell. John Harvard was

entered at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, by his step-father, John Ellison, and graduated in 1635. In 1637 he sailed for America. He left property for the founding of the University, which was named after him.

Chelmsford unfortunately saw the martyrdom of several persons. We have already mentioned the case of Thomas Watts. George Eagles, called "Trudge over" and "Trudge-over-the-Wold," on account of his extraordinary travels, was put to death here. Fox tells the story in all its horrors. He was captured at Colchester, brought here, and killed in a most barbarous, disgusting and cruel manner, his head afterwards being set up at the market cross "till the wind did blow it down."

Not only were religious victims put to death here, but also some charged with the crime of witchcraft, many poor old women being burnt.

Old Chelmsford had two Fairs; one was on May-Day, when of course the town would be gay with booths, bowers, arches, and screens of greenery and flowers, the Maypole, and all the other attractions of an old English May-Day. But let those who are apt to regard those days as "merrie" remember the cruelty and superstition of those times, and the wickedness so often associated with what might have been a poetic festival. The next Fair was held on the first of November, when bonfires were lit in the streets, and were more welcome than Maypoles at that time of year.

Will Kemp, the Morris Dancer, tells of his experiences in our County town. He was met at Widford by Sir Thomas Mildmay, who bought garters from the dancer at the palings of his park. At Chelmsford he had to lock himself in his room, as he was so exhausted, and had to " pacify the people from the window with words instead of deeds." Kemp says further that " the good cheer and kindly welcome I had at Chelmsford was much more than I was willing to entertain; for my only desire was to refrain from drinke and be temperate in my dyet."

The great family of Chelmsford and district was that of the Mildmays. Sir Thomas Mildmay built Moulsham Hall. The Manor of Moulsham was described in the *Survey* of 1591, the house being spoken of as " the greatest esquires building within the said county of Essex." Further it states : " To the said Maner-place are many fair gardens and orchards belonging, replenished with great store of good, and some rare kinds of fruits and herbs. . . . This Maner hath three hamlets, viz. the hamlet and street of Moulsham ; the hamlet and street of Wideford ; and the hamlet of Galelwood. In the hamlet of Moulsham there is a grammar school . . . one hospital, or poor house, for the maintenance and relief of divers poor leprous and lazer people which are put in and out by the said lord " (Sir Thomas Mildmay). "And within this hamlet also is an ancient cross or building with a prison for the hamlet, and the cross serveth some time as a market cross for sale of pease in the season and for fish and other mean victual."

There was a branch of the Mildmay family at Wanstead, one at Little Baddow, one at Terling, and one at Great Baddow. The great Sir Walter Mildmay, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the time of Queen Elizabeth, built Danbury Place, in Danbury Park; he married the sister of Sir Francis Walsingham, Secretary of State and was the founder of the Puritan College of Emanuel, Cambridge. Danbury Place was re-built and called Danbury Palace, as it was the residence of the Bishop of St. Albans.

Another famous Danbury family was that of St. Clere, It is supposed that the knights buried in Danbury Church were St. Cleres. Morant says that Hugh de St. Clere was a witness to the charter of King Stephen. The Manor house is now called St. Clere's Hall farm, I believe. The de Veres also were owners of this Manor of St. Clere, which still exists—a certain house at Horn Row pays doorstep rent to the said Manor of St. Clere.

Danbury Common is still one of the County beauty spots. The view from Horn Row, and that from the Rectory fields, are two of the finest in Essex. In the Spring, when the gorse is in bloom, the Common is a veritable field of the Cloth of Gold. Many flowers flourish, and in some spots the rare Sundew has been found. It is said that a flower called Danes Blood grows in the neighbourhood. That reminds one that Danbury means Danes Town.

According to an old folk story, the devil seems to have had an especial grudge against Danbury Church. On Corpus Christi Day, 1402, dressed as a friar,

he went into the building, "where he raged to the great terror of the parishioners."

There were several Chantry Chapels in Danbury, one being at the hamlet of Horn Row. Parts of the original buildings still remain. The St. Cleres built these.

Lovely walks and drives abound around Danbury, whether along by the Park to Sandon, or down the Common and up the steep rise to Bicnacre, where the ruins of the Priory still stand, or across the Common in another direction, and along the Devon-like lane to Gay Bowers. The mansion of Gay Bowers, as well as the Griffin at Danbury, is mentioned by Sir Walter Scott. A windmill stood at Danbury till quite recently; it was on the Maldon Road.

There is a pretty walk through the woods from Danbury to Little Baddow, which is a charming old-world place, especially at the Rodney, with its steep hill and quaint houses. The Little Baddow Chapel is one of The Five Mile Act conventicles. The Manor of Riffhams was held by Earl Godwin. The house, which is very ancient, has lately been restored. The Manor of Graces, which also dates back to the time of Edward the Confessor, at one time was held by John de Boreham, then by Nicholas de Gras, then by the Darceys and the Mildmays.

The parish of Great Baddow in Saxon times belonged to Elgar, the Earl of Mercia, who left it to his son Edwin. Morant tells us that at the time

of the Norman Invasion "he refused to join King Harold, because he had not received his share of the spoil gotten at the fight of Stanford-brigg; but after that king's fall, he solicited the citizens of London to make him or his brother Morkar, king. They not complying, he submitted to the Conqueror, who promised to give him his daughter in marriage. But the king not performing the promise, Edwin flew out into a rebellion and was slain while he was valiantly defending himself in 1071."

Later these lands were the property of Helen, daughter of Llewellyn, Prince of Wales. Helen was the widow of the Earl of Chester; she married again and brought the manor of Great Baddow to Robert de Quincy. Their daughter, Joan, married Humphrey de Bohun, son of the Earl of Essex. Henry VIII. settled Baddow Hall upon Catherine of Arragon. The Manor called Sir Hugh, Morant also says, belonged to Sir Hugh de Badewe in King Edward the third's reign.

These old-world villages around Chelmsford, including beautiful Boreham, with its mansions, New Hall and Boreham House, and Little Waltham, with its pretty river gardens, are becoming more or less suburbs. Chelmsford, like London, is stretching out long arms which embrace the surrounding districts. But if these places lose their original features, their story should never be forgotten.

Morant says of Chelmsford: "It is well supplied with excellent water, there being a conduit in the market place, which runs, every minute, above a

hogshead and a half; conveyed through the town in a beautiful stream. By means of which and *the commendable care of the inhabitants, it is kept clean and neat; and makes as good an appearance as any town in the kingdom.*"

RAYLEIGH AND RAWRETH

It is amusing to read the dogmatic assertions of some writers on Essex regarding the Rayleigh Castle Mound. Some scout as altogether absurd the idea that a castle ever stood there, but to-day one may see at the Priory Museum at Prittlewell the wooden foundations of the early castle, which was probably in existence in the time of Edward the Confessor.

Suene was the builder of the stone castle. He was related to the wife of William the Conqueror, and was granted the Manor of Rayleigh by that monarch. Suene's son, Robert de Essex, founded Prittlewell Priory. His grandson, Henry de Essex, it will be remembered, forfeited his patrimony on the charge of cowardice at the battle of Coleshill. Six years later he was challenged by Robert de Montfort to fight a duel in the meadows near the Thames at Reading. The duel was fought in the presence of King Henry and Queen Eleanor, and Henry de Essex, being vanquished, ended his days in Reading Abbey. The Corporation of Reading possesses a fine picture which depicts this duel, of which Carlyle has given us a fine description. The unfortunate Henry de Essex had married Alice de Vere, of Hedingham Castle, whose mother was a de Montfort.

Another famous owner of Rayleigh Castle was Hubert de Burgh, the High Constable of England. This Hubert figures in Shakespeare's *King John*. He had four wives, the last being Margaret, Duchess of Kent, and sister to Malcolm, King of Scotland, who survived him. Benton tells us she sued Hugh de Vere, Earl of Oxford, "for setting up a market at Prittlewell to the prejudice of her market at 'Ralege.' "

Rayleigh market was a famous one; it was held in the wide High Street. Rayleigh Fair, held on Trinity Monday, was not only famous, but also infamous. "As rough as Rayleigh Fair," became a saying in the County. I am told that certain families saved up their disputes till the Fair time, when they settled them by free fights in the streets. Old inhabitants say that prizes were given to the men who could tell the biggest lies and swear the deepest oaths. Both market and fair have been done away with.

Rayleigh had its royal park and hunting lodge. "Rayleigh Lodge" has in the oldest part of the house a bedroom which is still called "King Henry the Eighth's room." This royal park adjoined the park of Rochford Hall.

The High Street once rejoiced in rows of splendid trees, which it is said were cut down and used for the restoration of Hadleigh Castle. This castle, which is now in ruins, was built by Hubert de Burgh with the stones from Rayleigh Castle. What a wondrous sight that stone castle of Rayleigh must have been, standing upon that towering mound!

The windmill, too, was a fine sight before it was shorn of its sails. Even now it is a landmark for many miles, standing as it does on the site of the old castle.

At one time Rayleigh had five mills. Besides the one still standing on London Hill, there were three in Eastwood Road, and one in Hockley Road, in the garden of "Ruffles." The doorstep of that quaint thatched cottage called "Ruffles Cottage" is composed of the old mill stone.

Rawreth had a mill which stood on an artificial mound. It has long since disappeared. It must have stood in the field called Mill Field.

On London Hill, which was the way up to the castle, and also the old coaching road, there stand three very old cottages which once formed the oldest inn of the town, called "The Green Bough." The sign consisted of a fresh green bough which was renewed daily.

There are some other very old cottages on the top of the hill in Hockley Road, just before the road dips down to the Holy Well. These houses were also at one time an inn. That part of the road is called The Alley, on account, it is supposed, of a skittle alley belonging to the inn. The late tenant of one of these cottages was a well-known character named Will Camper, the road-man, whose little garden beside the road was a perfect picture. Inside his cottage were some quaint old things, such as wheel-back chairs, and two grandfather clocks, These clocks bore tickets on their polished breasts. On one was written "Old time," and on the other.

"New time." When it came to the season to put the time forward or back, all he had to do was to change the labels. It gave one a heart-ache when the old man's treasures were sold by auction in the garden after his death, and his beloved flowers trampled upon.

Opposite Will Camper's cottage stands "Cedar Lodge," a wooden house which was once two cottages. Here lived the Rev. Nehemiah Kernock, who discovered the key to John Wesley's Journal, which was written in cipher. The clue was found partly through a remarkable dream Mr. Kernock had at "The Cedars," and partly through finding a Bible of Wesley's which was for sale. In it Wesley had written some things in this same cipher.

John Wesley passed through Rayleigh several times when on his way to Leigh-on-Sea. He tells us in his Journal that on one occasion he reached Rayleigh in the evening, and, the roads being so bad, the friends who were with him decided to remain there for the night, but he pressed on to Leigh. He goes on to say that although it was a dark night, and the road very bad, he did not go a step out of his way, but reached Leigh in good time.

Rayleigh has had some saintly men as Rectors. There was James Eliot, uncle to John Eliot, of Little Baddow, who was the first missionary to the American Indians, and Abraham Caley,* who was ejected for conscience sake in 1662, to whose memory the Caley Hall was dedicated by the Congregationalists on Crown Hill. Stephen Vassal was an

* *Caley of Rayleigh*, by Mrs. Charlotte Skinner.

earlier Rector. His brother, Captain William Vassal, went out to New England with Governor Winthrop in 1630. His daughter married Resolved White of *The Mayflower*. The Vassal's home was at Cockseyhurst, Eastwood (still standing). Their half-brother Samuel owned several ships called *Mayflower*, and he was part owner of the one which sailed to New England.*

Mr. Francis Bright, lecturer at Rayleigh Church, was another who went out with Governor Winthrop.

As far as is known, Rayleigh did not contribute any passengers to *The Mayflower*, but, strangely enough, in the Church Registers for that period, there are several names of Pilgrim families, such as Carver, Standish, Alden, while in the Rawreth Registers the name of Bitteridge occurs. The name of Standish appears in the Archidiaconal Records at Chelmsford. In 1590 Richard Standish was in trouble before the Archdeacon. In 1613 there is this entry:—"Raylegh. Richard Standish. He holdeth Parkers farm in Rayleigh . . . there is cut down an old oak tree marked with a cross time out of mind for the severalities of the parishioners, but who hath cutt the same down is not known."

Many other Rayleigh folk were in trouble before the Archdeacon. In 1588 "Will Fane for neglecting to have his child christened, alleged that his gossips (sponsors) were not in readiness while they . . . absolved."

* *New Light on the Pilgrim Story*, by Rev. T. W. Mason and Mrs. Skinner.

In 1589 James Mynches was sentenced "to confess openly in Rayleigh Church that he was heartily sorry he had carried his child to another church to be baptized."

1589. "John Badcock, sitting with others on benches at Mother Larkin's house amusing themselves by imitating the parson and churchwardens, etc. To confess his sorrow in the church of Rayleigh."

1595. "Edward Boman for digging roots on Sunday."

1596. "William Hatch . . . he saith he doth not remember whether he did work or open his shop window on St. Luke's Day."

1596. "Henry Tridle for fighting with boys, striking them in the church on Coronation Day."

1596. "John Newton for a common skolder" (uncharitable person)."

1596. "Henry Love, a common swearer and blasphemer (uncharitable neighbour), and keeping not his church according to the queen's instructions and for gathering and driving hoggs on the Sabbath Day."

1598. "Jeremiah Fauks for suffering the pale of his fence to decay to the annoyance of the churchyard."

A man named Waters was in trouble for saying "there was not an honest woman in Rayleigh to the great scandal of the town."

In the High Street stands an old house, now called "Kingsley House," but at one time "Bull House," no doubt on account of the cruel custom of bull baiting—the bull ring was close at hand.

Here lived Golden Nehemiah Prentice. His resting place is in Rayleigh Church. Next to his house was the Bull Inn, now the Golden Lion, named after him. Bull Lane runs at the back of these houses.

I am indebted to my mother, Mrs. Skinner, for some interesting stories which she gathered from old inhabitants and incorporated in her lecture, *Romantic Rayleigh*. The following, relative to the smuggling days, is one of them. An old resident told her that when he was young, an old man told him that he had conveyed thousands of pounds of silk to London. He used to drive a cart stacked full of meat to the cook at the Guild Hall. Several times he was followed, but as he always turned in at the Guild Hall it was not suspected that underneath the meat the precious silk was hidden. Brandy and cigars as well as silk were brought to Rayleigh up the little river Roch, which was much larger than it is now. There were hiding places on Thundersley Common, and one at Hockley, called Brandy Hole.

An exciting story is told of Mr. Ruffle, who lived in the old house now called "Ruffles" (this has a new front). He was riding home one day with his pockets full of money. By some strange instinct he changed his usual route; instead of coming up Bread and Cheese Hill, he turned up Thundersley Hill. Two robbers were waiting for him on Bread and Cheese Hill. They had already dug his grave in a wood hard by. This they confessed to in after days.

Rayleigh at one time was noted for its schools. The Rev. James Pilkington (first Baptist Minister)

started a boys' school at "The Hollies." He was succeeded by Mr. Unwins. At this school Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, was partly educated. Dr. Dale was not a favourite with Mr. Unwins, and did not please this strict master. When on his honeymoon, he took his bride to see the gentle wife of the stern schoolmaster. Mr. Unwins remarked that he was glad to hear of "such progress an untoward boy had made!" (This story was told to Mrs. Skinner by Mr. Unwin's grandson).

When a boy, Charles Haddon Spurgeon lived at Buckingham House in the High Street for a period. One of his sisters was born there.

Opposite Rayleigh House, there was a beautiful meadow, now, alas, built upon, which was called "The Watch Field." Here it was that the beacon was lit. One one occasion it was lit through a false alarm being given by a Leigh fisherman.

Reference is made in the chapter on Rochford to the Lawless, Whispering or Cock Crowing Court, which was held in what was once Kingsley Lane—now cut up for the new arterial road. The Lord of the Manor of Great Wheatleys held this Court at midnight, when all leases were renewed in a whisper. Many of the other Manors, such as Down Hall, had to pay service to this Court. The story is that the Lord of Great Wheatleys was awakened by the crowing of a cock, and heard his tenants whispering under his window. They were plotting to burn the house down. This made him decree that leases were to be renewed in the fashion described, while

men imitated the crowing of cocks. The Court was afterwards transferred to Rochford.

There have been some quaint characters in Rayleigh of recent years. One old couple I remember were so picturesque as never to be forgotten when once seen. The husband had a wonderful power over bees. He would pick them up with his fingers, stroke them, and talk away to them in his quaint manner. Another old man was wonderful with wasps. He was sent for one day to dig out a wasp nest on the Mount. He came in the day time, scorning such methods as using gun-cotton or wearing gloves and veils. He just dug the nest out. Bystanders were stung and fled in dismay, but old George kept steadily on till he had the nest out. On another occasion a visitor was curious to know how many wasps a tin contained, so he picked them up with his fingers and counted them one at a time.

Old Mr. W. was an honest, upright soul, but had no idea of numbers. He told a friend at the time of the King's coronation that there were to be a thousand kings present. He then added, "The ole devil oughter be there, my, wouldn't he 'ave a 'aul!"

The Rev. James Pilkington referred to had a wonderful influence upon the town, which in his time was full of rough folk. When he first went there, men used to sit drinking in the street, and would throw all kinds of rubbish at him. When speaking one day at a gathering on Thundersley Common, he pleaded with the men to lead better lives. "Some of you may have planned to harm me," he said. A man among the crowd was holding a brick ready

to throw at him. On hearing these words he dropped the brick, listened attentively, and was converted. He became one of the first officers of the Baptist Church.

Mr. Pilkington's first services were held where now stand the row of shops called "Dollmartens." When it became necessary to build a church, an all night prayer meeting was held in a house near by. Prayer was made for the means whereby to set to work. In the early morning one of those who had been at the meeting was crossing a field to go home, when he met the owner of the said field, who stopped to speak and told him he had come out to look for him, as he had been troubled about him all night. "Why," said the man, "we have been praying all night for means to get a chapel." "I will give you the land," said the owner; "just step over as much of this field as you want."

Rayleigh figures largely in the struggle for religious liberty. Its Martyrs' Memorial bears some honoured names. Stephen Glover of Rayleigh was arrested and taken to Colchester for his Protestant principles. John Ardley, a husbandman of Great Wigborough, was burnt at Rayleigh, and also Squire Causton, of Thundersley.

Edmund Tyrell, called the Informer, lived at "Beeches," at Rawreth. He was present at the martyrdom of Ardley. On his way home, either down the Crown Lane or London Hill way, he overtook two strangers. By his cunning he found out they were Protestants. He had them arrested, and

they were burnt, one at Saffron Walden and the other at Uxbridge.

"Beeches", the property of Tyrell, was owned, Benton tells us, by Odo, Bishop of Bayeaux, half brother to William I. In the time of Edward III the Manor belonged to the family named De la Beche. Later it was in the possession of Edmund Tyrell's ancestor, Sir William Tyrell of Heron, son of Sir John Tyrell and his wife Alice Coggeshall.

Benton tells us in a footnote that a field at "Beeches", called "Ladylands", had a black patch which nothing could remove. Tradition said it was where Edmund Tyrell burnt a woman by order of Bishop Bonner.

Later Dr. White, who founded Sion College, London, owned "Beeches"; he settled it upon that foundation, but just lately it has been sold. The present house is called "Beeches Farm," but no trace of the old house exists.

There was a family of White at Hutton. Morant says they came from Runwell, but I cannot find out where they lived. There was a Richard White, of Hutton, whose daughter Susan was first Lady of the Bedchamber to Mary the First. She married Thomas Tonge, Clarencieuse. *Her mother was Maude, daughter of William Tyrell of Heron. On the attainder of Sir John Gates, his Manor of Runwell was given by Mary to Susan Tonge. She left it to her nephew, George White, and his heirs. This George had also Hutton, Thundersley, Rivenhall, and half of Rawreth (Morant).

* Mrs. Strickland's *Lives of the Queens of England*.

There are many interesting houses in Rawreth. Chicester Hall, Benton tells us, was in the Andrews family. Bishop Lancelot Andrews was of this family, and Chicester Hall was named after his Bishopric. The hall still stands, but has a new part built on to the side of the old, and is let as two houses. It seems there used to be a wonderful old fireplace in the old part of the house. Unfortunately most old fireplaces and ingle nooks have disappeared, having been built in for the better accommodation of modern cooking and heating stoves. A good part of the moat is still left.

Another interesting house is Shotgate Farm. Part of this is very old. There are three staircases. The oldest leads to two rooms, opening one from the other, but the door between them is so small that one has to bend double to get through. In this house, there is a huge chimney in which folks can walk about. The gate of the farm has enormous posts—they were once some of the supports of old Southend pier.

Benton has a good deal to say about Shotgate, and speaks of deeds in the time of James the First. In the ancient kitchen of the house there is a comparatively modern pump bearing the date 1778, and the letters S.B. A Samuel Brown was a tenant about that time, and these may be his initials. The house is spoken of as standing on Rawerey Shot Common.

Opposite Shotgate Farm are some cottages with very curious chimneys. These cottages are said

to have been the old inn on the Common, called "The King's Head."

At Rawreth Hall one may see part of the old moat, which evidently was originally of considerable extent. There is nothing ancient looking about the present house, but there are wonderful old barns about the farm.

Rawreth Church is unusual in style. It contains some good copies of famous pictures—Da Vinci's *Last Supper*, Raphael's *Madonna*, etc. There is a brass on the wall to the memory of Edmund Tyrell. The hope is expressed that he may have "a blessed resurrection." However uncertain that may be, it is sure that many of his victims will, and not least among them brave Rose Allen of Great Bentley. Fox tells her story, how at two o'clock one Sunday morning, she, with her mother and step-father, Alice and William Munt, was awakened from her sleep by Tyrell and his men, and told she was to get ready to go to Colchester. Mrs. Munt was not well and requested that her daughter might fetch her something to drink. Rose took up a candle in one hand and a stone jug in the other, and went to fetch the drink. Tyrell followed her, and, taking the candle from her, held her hand in the flame till the sinews cracked. Because she did not cry out, he used the most awful language a man could use to a woman. She told him she had more cause to rejoice than cry. Later, when visited by a friend when in prison, Rose said that at first she had "some grief, but the longer my

hand burned the less I felt it." Then in her quaint but beautiful way she said, "I could have laid him on the face with the stone jug if I had would, as no man held me, but I thank God I did it not "

Brave Rose Allen, with her mother and step-father, was burnt outside the walls of Colchester Castle in August, 1557.

THE DE MONTFORTS AND THE DE VERES.

BOTH these ancient and noble families were intimately connected with Essex, and their story dates from the coming of William the Conqueror. Hugo de Montfort was given sixteen lordships in this county, while Alberic de Vere was given the Saxon stronghold of Hedingham and many other possessions.

Hugh de Montfort held the Manor of Marks Hall at Coggeshall, those of Kelvedon, Leyton, Purley, Goldhanger, Totham, Raynes Hall, etc. Hugh lost his life in a duel with a member of another illustrious Essex family—Henry de Ferrers.* He left a son named Hugh, who had two sons—Hugh and Robert. The former becoming a monk, the latter inherited the patrimony, but, getting into trouble with Henry I, he fled to Jerusalem, leaving his property in the hands of the king. King Henry gave most of it to Henry de Essex, of Rayleigh Castle, son of Robert de Essex, the founder of Prittlewell Priory, and grandson of Swene. But seven years after Henry de Essex's sorrowful downfall, when he was said to have cast away the royal standard in Wales (he was standard bearer and High Constable), thus leaving Henry II. in jeopardy, we find a Robert de Montfort challenging him to a duel. This duel, as we have

*Morant.

already seen, was fought in a meadow near Reading Abbey, before King Henry and Queen Eleanor. Henry de Essex was overcome by de Montfort, but his life was spared by the intervention of the king, and the rest of his days were spent in Reading Abbey.

It seems as if this Robert de Montfort must be the one who fled to Jerusalem in the time of Henry the First. No doubt the fact that his lands were given to de Essex helped to account for his challenge to combat, though he does not seem to have got back his property. Morant says he and his brother Hugh both died while on a pilgrimage. By a second marriage their father had a daughter, who was married to Gilbert de Gaunt ; they had a son, Hugh, who took his mother's illustrious name of de Montfort.

It is interesting to trace the different branches of the de Montfort family and to note their close connection with English history. In the reign of Henry III, we find Simon de Montfort coming over from France to claim property which his family held in this country. Henry received him graciously and heaped honours upon him, one being the Earldom of Leicester. The subsequent history of Simon de Montfort is well known, and that he was killed in the Battle of Evesham, in 1365. He had married King Henry's sister, Eleanor, daughter of King John and Queen Isabella, and widow of the Earl of Pembroke. They had three sons, Simon, Guy, and Henry. Simon and Guy de Montfort murdered their cousin, Henry, son of Richard, the king of the Romans (Richard was brother to Henry III). They committed this crime in revenge for the death and

mutilation of their father at Evesham. Their brother Henry fell with his father and was left for dead, but the story is that the following day a noble lady was searching among the dead for the body of her father, when she came across young Henry de Montfort, who, though blinded, was not dead. She had him taken to her home, nursed him back to health, and eventually became his bride. But they were obliged to live in hiding for fear of the king. The story says they lived at Bethnal Green, where de Montfort was known as "the silly blind beggar." There is a ballad, written probably in the time of Elizabeth, which tells the story of their daughter Elizabeth (Bessie), who left her home to seek her fortune in Essex.

"The Beggar's Daughter of Bednall Green."

"She went till she came to Stratford-le-Bow,
Then knew she not whither nor which way to go,
With tears she lamented her hard destiny,
So sad and so heavy was pretty Bessie.

She kept on her journey until it was day,
And went into Romford along the highway,
When at the 'Queen's Head' entertained was she,
So fair and so favoured was pretty Bessie.

The young men of Romford in her had a joy,
She showed herself courteous and modest and coy,
And at her commandment still would they be,
So fair and so comely was pretty Bessie.

The ballad is a long one, and goes on to tell how, when the suitors found out that Bessie's father was a blind beggar, they all forsook her but one noble youth. This young knight made a splendid wedding feast, and while it was in progress, a blind minstrel entered and commenced to play on his lute. Minstrels had the right in those days to go where they wished, and no-one excluded any member of this fraternity from festive scenes, for there was a Minstrels' Guild.

Thus it happened that the woman minstrel rode on horseback into Westminster Hall in 1316, and presented a letter of complaint to Edward the Second. When the king complained to the door-keepers for letting her in, they replied that it never was the custom of the king's palace to deny admission to minstrels, especially on such high solemnities and feast days. (Women also belonged to the Guild of Minstrels.)

The blind minstrel at the wedding feast began to tell in song the story of his life. He was no less a person than the bride's father, Henry de Montfort, and the bridegroom learnt from the song that he had married not only a good and beautiful maiden, but a descendant of kings and princes, and the heiress of the illustrious de Montforts.

In 1341, John de Montfort, Duke of Brittany, died, and named his niece, Jane de Montfort, wife of Charles of Blois, his heiress. But he had a nephew, John de Montfort, son of his brother Arthur, who had a prior right to the Province of Brittany. Hence there arose war between the rival parties. Edward

the Third was on the throne of England, and he took the side of John de Montfort. But unfortunately John was taken prisoner by Charles of Blois, and removed to Paris. De Montfort's wife, also named Jane, was a most remarkable woman. She put herself at the head of her husband's followers, and taking, upon herself the position of a general in an army, endured great hardships and won brilliant victories. She sent her son John over to England to the care of Edward III. He eventually became Duke of Brittany, but many a struggle took place before that event. His wonderful mother served Charles of Blois as he had served her husband—she made him prisoner, sending him to London for safe keeping. Froissart says that Jane de Montfort had "the courage of a man and the heart of a lion." Young John de Montfort married Edward the Third's daughter, Mary.

Our Henry the Fourth married a de Montfort for his second wife. His first wife, whom he married when Earl of Derby, was Mary de Bohun, daughter of Humphrey, Earl of Essex. Mary de Bohun died before he became king. The second wife was Johanna, widow of John de Montfort, Duke of Britagne, and daughter of John, king of Navarre. Johanna had several children by her first husband, but none by the king of England. Her life was full of tragic experiences, as recorded by Miss Strickland in her *Lives of the Queens of England*, but we will confine ourselves to that part of her life which was spent in England.

On the death of Henry the Fourth, Queen Johanna retired to the royal dower house of Pirgo, at Havering

atte Bower, near Romford. She was much attached to this home, but evil days came for her. A priest accused her of having caused the death of her late husband, the king, through the power of witchcraft. Her stepson, King Henry the Fifth (Prince Hal), thereupon took her from Pirgo and shut her up a close prisoner in Pevensey Castle. Her own son, the Duke of Bretagne, was powerless to help her. Henry V. also took away her jewels and dowry. But at length remorse overtook him, and he restored his step-mother to her beloved Pirgo and returned her jewels and dowry.

It seems that Queen Johanna was a good needlewoman. In July 1418 we find that Henry V. desires that his collectors of the Port of London allow, among other things, two bales of cloth of Josselin to come to his step-mother (This Josselin was a species of fine linen).

Alberic de Vere, who came over with the Conqueror, married William's half-sister, Beatrix. We have already seen that Hedingham Castle was given to him with other possessions. The de Veres were a very rich family, as much property came to them through marriages. After Hubert de Burgh's time they held the Honour of Rayleigh, also Hadleigh, Gosfield, etc. The Manor of Gilbecrake, in Purleigh, was purchased by the de Veres from Edmund, Lord Gray, and Florentina, his wife. In the year 1323 it was described as consisting of one messuage, with a garden and dove house, water mill, wind mill, 80 acres of wood, and another 16 acres called Gibecrack-

hoo, held of Robert Mantell by the service of a pair of gilt spurs.

The Manor of Earls Fee in Prittlewell belonged to the de Veres, and was held by them by the service of a clove gilly flower. The Manor of Downham also belonged to them. There were "20 messuages, two mills, one dove house, 20 gardens, 80 acres of arable land, 200 of meadow, 700 of pasture, and 100 of furze and heath."*

Aubrey de Vere was the first Earl of Oxford. Maud, or Matilda, daughter of Henry I. and the Saxon Princess Matilda, gave him this title when she claimed the throne. He and Lucy his wife founded the Priory of Hedingham.

Morant says that the de Vere family was "reputed the most ancient and illustrious in the world." There were in if twenty Earls, a Lord High Chamberlain, a High Admiral, a Chief Justice, a Chancellor, a Lord High Steward, a Constable, a Bishop of Hereford, Warriors, Generals, four Knights of the Garter, and the first Marquis—of Dublin.

King Richard the Second made a great favourite of Robert de Vere, whom he created Marquis of Dublin. Robert married a lady of high degree, who was Lady in Waiting to Richard's good Queen Anne. But Robert de Vere's character does not seem to have been very high. One good thing about him is that he clung to Richard faithfully when evil

*"A parcel of land incorporated with the Manor of Doddinghurst was held of the King of the honour of Rayleigh in socage by the service of thee arrows feathered with eagles feathers bound with a gold thread". *Morant.*

days came to him, and troubles beset him. De Vere did his best against Henry of Lancaster, afterwards Henry IV. (the usurper), but failing, fled for his life to Ireland, where he died, but was brought to Essex to be buried.

Henry, it will be remembered, shut up the hapless Richard in Pontefract Castle. One cannot help remembering against Richard his treatment of those slaves of the soil when they rebelled against their cruel lot, under the leadership of Watt Tyler ; and also how he caused his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, to be lured from Pleshey and then brutally murdered. (Gloucester had married the heiress of Pleshey, Eleanor de Bohun, sister to Henry the Fourth's wife, Mary). Richard died in Pontefract (murdered, it was said), but the story was put about that he had escaped to Scotland. Letters were sent to his friends bearing his seal, but no attempt was made to send any message to his young widow, Isabella of France, at her home at Pirgo.

Maud de Vere, the aged dowager Countess of Oxford, Mother of Earl Robert, took up the cause of Richard. She sent little gold and silver stags to his friends (which were the presents the late king was wont to send). It was a gentleman of Richard's bed-chamber named Serlo, or Serle, who helped to spread the story that Richard was alive. Serle was supposed to have taken part in the murder of Thomas of Woodstock, Earl of Gloucester. So when Henry the Fourth got him in his power, he sent him to Pleshey, where the servants of the late Duke tore him to pieces.

Henry imprisoned the aged Countess of Oxford and took away her property for her participation in the affair, but when he married Johanna de Montfort, she prevailed on him to pardon Maud de Vere and to restore her possessions.

Miss Strickland tells us that it was a Lady de Vere who was the first peeress to earn her living by her needle. In those cruel and senseless Wars of the Roses, the de Veres took the side of the House of Lancaster, and when Edward of York came to the throne, he had two de Veres put to death. It seems that a third was imprisoned, and his Countess Margaret with his little children would have starved but for her prowess with her needle. But happier days restored her husband and fortune.

The first Suffragette was a de Vere! Anne de Vere, daughter of Horace de Vere, Baron of Tilbury, who married Thomas, Lord Fairfax, General of the Parliamentary Army, was present at the trial of Charles I. When her husband's name was called, no answer was received; the crier called a second time, when a voice said, "He had more wit than to be here." This caused an uproar in the Court. Later on, during a speech by the President, who used the expression, "all the people of England," the same voice called, "No, not the hundredth part of them." One of the officers then bade the soldiers fire into the box from whence the voice came, but when it was found that it was Lady Fairfax who had said these things, she was promptly forced to leave the building! Carlyle speaks of Anne de Vere as a "de Vere of the fighting Veres and given to Presbyterianism."

Pontefract Castle—that fortress of so many dark deeds—played an important part in the days of Anne de Vere, Lady Fairfax. It had been the centre of intrigue during the Wars of the Roses, and the stronghold of the House of Lancaster. During the struggle between the Royalists and the Parliamentary Force it was the scene of bitter and desperate issues. It was besieged by first one and then the other of the opposing forces. The Keep is almost all that is left now, but a complete plan of the ancient castle was found among the possessions of a descendant of the Fairfax family.

Of Hedingham Castle there remains a noble tower with four turrets. It is supposed there were three more towers like it. There was a vineyard on the west side of the castle. Morant says that in his time it was called " The Lord's Orchard where lately grew wild vines producing red grapes." He also gives us a picture of the grandeur of the de Vere family. " Edward, the seventeenth earl, rid into the city to his house by London Stone with eighty gentlemen, in a livery of Reading tawny, and chains of gold about their necks before him ; and one hundred tall yeomen, in the like livery, to follow him, without chains ; but all having his cognizance of the blue boar embroidered on the left shoulder. He was also the first that brought perfumed gloves, and such fineries, out of Italy into this country."

ROCHFORD HALL AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS

THE ancient Hall of Rochford is a valuable old mansion, not only on account of its age, but because it has figured so largely in the civil and religious history of our land.

Part of the Hall is now a golf club headquarters, while the other part is inhabited by the overseer of the adjacent farm. One would like to see the old mansion rescued and converted into a County or Local Museum.

Both Philip Morant and Benton have left us much useful information about Rochford Hall, but for which we should not be able to link up the story, which goes back many generations.

In 1247 Sir Guy de Rochford had a market and fair in the town of Rochford. In 1258 he was summoned to appear before the Justices at Chelmsford to show by what right he claimed "Wreck of Sea, Tumbrell, Emendation (fixing) of Assize of bread and beer broken in Rochford." Wreck of Sea of course means the claim to any wreckage thrown up on the coast near Rochford, or brought up by the river Roch. Tumbrell refers to the ducking stool in which scolds and cheating tradespeople were ducked in a muddy pond. Emendation of Assize means fixing the price or rate. Sir Guy de Rochford told the Justices that the right to Wreck of Sea was

given to his uncle, another Sir Guy de Rochford, by John de Burgh, of Rayleigh Castle. And that Henry II gave a charter to the said Guy de Rochford and his heirs granting them "one market at his Manor of Rochford every week upon Tuesdays, and one fair yearly in Whitsun week, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday: and also the right of Tumbrell and Assize of bread." This charter he produced in Court. He further said that John de Burgh senior gave to Guy de Rochford 3s. yearly rent, which was wont to be paid by the village of Rochford upon the View of Frankpledge."*

The de Rochford family seems to have died out. Edward III granted the Manor of Rochford to William de Bohun, of Pleshy in Essex, Earl of Northampton. His son, Sir Humphrey, High Constable of England and Earl of Essex, who succeeded him, had no sons; his two daughters were Eleanor, married to Thomas Woostock, Duke of Gloucester, sixth son of Edward III† (the de Bohuns were descended from Elizabeth, daughter of Edward I). The second daughter, Mary, was married to Henry, Earl of Derby, who afterwards became Henry IV. Mary was the mother of Prince Hal, afterwards Henry V. She was a "lady of finished education, being skilled in Latin and school divinity." Eleanor's daughter, Anne, was co-heir

* A View of Frank Pledge was the hearing of the oaths taken by boys of fourteen who were Frank Pledges. Families of tens formed the old Frith Guilds who were the keepers of the peace in Anglo Saxon times, and these boys when admitted were called Frank Pledges.

† Benton's *History of the Rochford Hundred*.

with Henry V to the de Bohun estates. She married tor the third time William Bourchier, who took the fitle of Earl of Essex.

Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Essex, left Rochford Hall to his widow, Joan Fitz-alan, daughter of the Earl of Arundel.

Joan was re-married to Henry Bottler, fourth Earl of Ormond. They had three sons; the eldest, James, inherited his mother's estates. He was created Earl of Wiltshire. He was beheaded on May 1st, 1461, for being a Lancastrian. His estates were confiscated to the Crown. Edward IV—then king—gave Rochford Hall to his sister Anne, Duchess of Exeter. Afterwards it was given to his father-in-law, Earl Rivers; after his tragic death in 1469, it went to his grandson, Thomas Grey, Marquis of Dorset. Thomas Grey gave the Manor to his brother Richard. Upon the death of Richard Grey, Thomas Bottler, brother to James, the last Earl of Ormond and Wiltshire, petitioned Richard III for the restoration of his brother's estates, which petition was granted, he being summoned to Parliament in 1495 by the title of Sir Thomas Ormond de Rochford. He left two daughters, one being Margaret, married to Sir William Boleyn, of Bickling Hall, in Norfolk. They had an only son, Sir Thomas Boleyn, who inherited his mother's estate of Rochford Hall, and was created Viscount Rochford, and then Earl of Ormond and Wiltshire. His wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. They had three famous children: George, Viscount Rochford, Mary, and Anne.

Of the terrible fate of George and his sister, Queen Anne Boleyn, nothing much need be said. Their story forms one of the pages of history of which we are ashamed—ashamed of the cruelty and injustice there recorded. Public opinion now-a-days considers they were innocent of the gross charges brought against them.

One can picture the gay-hearted girl Anne Boleyn making the old Hall ring with her sweet voice and with the music of her lute. The Viscount Chateaubriant has given us a fascinating description of Anne; he says: "Besides singing like a syren, accompanying herself on the lute, she harped better than King David" (Miss Strickland).

It will always be remembered of Anne, in spite of all her faults, that she was a deeply wronged woman. And to her credit it will always be remembered that it was to her that Tyndale owed the fact that at last he was permitted to circulate the Bible freely in this land. The presentation copy he had made for her is preserved in the British Museum. Anne also befriended Latimer. Mary Boleyn* inherited Rochford Hall. She married first William Carey and then Sir William Stafford. Her son, Henry Carey, inherited Rochford Hall. Queen Elizabeth (his

* In Augustus Hare's *Westminster* he says that Lady Katherine Knollys (1568), daughter of William Carey and Mary Boleyn, who is buried in the Abbey, was one of the three devoted ladies who "attended her Aunt, Anne Boleyn, upon the scaffold, and was afterwards Chief Lady of the Bed chamber to her cousin, Queen Elizabeth." Of the two other ladies who were with Anne, one was Margaret Lee (*nee* Wyatt), sister of the poet, but the name of the third is not known.

cousin) created him Baron Hunsdon. Henry Carey sold Rochford Hall to Lord Rich in 1555.

This Lord Rich first supported the cause of Lady Jane Grey, and then went over to Mary's side. His son was created Earl of Warwick, and figures so largely in Protestant history. He had, as private chaplains at Rochford, Robert Wright and the saintly John Greenwood (afterwards martyred); Robert, the second Earl of Warwick, figured in the infamous Essex Witch Trials.

Robert, the third Earl, had an only son, Robert, who married Oliver Cromwell's daughter, Frances, but he died before his father. This third Earl married for his second wife Anne, daughter of Sir Thomas Cheke, of Pirgo. There was much intermarriage between these families. Essex, the daughter of Robert, the first Earl of Warwick, married Sir Thomas Cheke, of Pirgo.

The third Earl was succeeded by his brother, who married Mary Boyle, daughter of the Earl of Cork, Governor of Ireland. Cromwell, the Lord Protector, said that if all the Governors of Ireland had been like Richard Boyle there would never have been any trouble with the Irish people.

Mary Boyle, or as she is better known, Lady Rich, was a woman of great strength of character and of saintly life. Her diary is preserved in the British Museum. When residing at Rochford Hall, she often rode in her coach to Rayleigh Church to hear one of her favourite preachers, Rev. Abraham

Caley, who was ejected in 1662, when so many clergymen were deprived of their livings. Lady Rich records his death with great grief.

This last Earl and Countess had two children, one a girl who died in infancy. The son, Lord Rich, died suddenly. Though the Earl was an ungodly man, he thought very highly of his saintly wife. At the death of their son he told Dr. Walker, of Fyfield, that he feared the blow would kill her, "and she is more to me than a hundred sons."

At the death of the last Earl, Rochford Hall went to the husband of his niece, Viscount St. John. His son, Viscount Bolingbroke, sold it to Sir Richard Child, afterwards Earl Tylney, who built Wanstead House. It came to his descendant, Catherine Tylney Long, the Essex heiress. Rochford Hall came into the hands of her heartless husband, who squandered her patrimony, there being no Married Women's Property Act in those days. Rochford Hall was finally bought by the Tabor family, in whose possession it still is to-day.

As to whether Rochford Hall was the birthplace of Anne Boleyn there is difference of opinion, but popular belief seems to be coming round to the opinion that it *was* her birthplace. The same stories of her haunting the rooms is told at Hever Castle in Kent, as well as at Rochford Hall. There is a very large room at the latter Hall called Anne Boleyn's Nursery, which she is still supposed to visit at night. The writer once gave a talk on the *History of Rochford Hall* in that very room. It was evening and it grew dusk; there was no light, so

the talk had to continue in the growing darkness. Suddenly there was a strange noise at the further end and the audience became nervous; a still louder noise, and then into the midst jumped a black cat which had come down the chimney!

The little town of Rochford has also figured largely in religious history. Edward Calamy* was rector. He it was who preached the funeral sermon for the great Earl of Warwick, whose chaplain was John Greenwood.

Rochford was the scene of the martyrdom of John Simson, husbandman, of Great Wigborough, on June 10th, 1555. He was condemned to the flames at the same time as John Ardley, who was burnt at Rayleigh.

At Rochford was held the ancient Whispering Court which had its origin at Rayleigh. All leases were renewed in a whisper at midnight.

Rochford is still a quaint old town, and still preserves its reputation for religious and civic progress.

* Calamy wrote the stories of the ejected ministers of 1662

WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC

Essex has been noted for its witches and witch-finders. As late as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many persons were persecuted and ill-used on account of their supposed witchcraft, and even in the present century people have been accused of this art. In 1908, an old woman was believed to be a witch, and this belief led to her husband being assaulted, and the case going before the local Police Court; the assailant was bound over to keep the peace.

Captain Harriott, of Broomhills, near Rochford, tells in his book, *Struggles Through Life*, of a couple named Hart, who lived "in the second cottage upon entering Rochford from the Stambridge Road." Fishermen said they saw the wife floating upon the water. She used to grow white poppies in her garden, and these were supposed to be for her imps. The husband was "swum" and nearly drowned. The wife was tied to the end of a boat, and it was said she floated like a cork.*

When searching through the Archidiaconal Records, I came across another Rochford woman who was in trouble on account of a charge of witchcraft—Joan Hinckson. The entry says: "She is

* Benton's *History of the Rochford Hundred*.

suspected of witchcraft. Mr. Firth, rector of Hawkwell, appeared."

Ellen Bett, of Waltham, was brought before the Archdeacon on a charge of witchcraft in 1588.

Anna Moore, of Rayleigh, 1595; "Suspected of soothsaying, one who takes upon her to tell who hath stolen goods, contrary to God's law and men's."

An old Rayleigh resident told me how he went to consult a "Wise Woman" when he was a boy, but not in Rayleigh. A man had been working on his mother's farm, and had gone off with an implement. He got a woman neighbour to go with him to consult a "wise woman" regarding the stolen property. He was very frightened, and clung to his friend's dress. The "Wise Woman" had a great sheet over her head. The lad gave her two and six when he went into the room. After a few minutes the woman requested the neighbour to leave the boy alone with her. When the lad objected to this, the "wise woman" said she could tell him nothing unless they were alone. So the friend went out. She then asked him for more money. The boy replied that he had no more. Saying she would make the one half crown do, she then artfully tried to get from him all the information she could regarding the thief, and ended by saying the stolen article would never be recovered, which was quite true.

It is said that there were always six witches at Canewdon—three in silk and three in cotton, and that when one died a stone fell out of the church wall. There was always another witch to take her place. Canewdon is called "the witch country."

The belief in Magic and Witchcraft still survives in Essex. There died in Rochford an old lady personally known to the writer, who confidently affirmed that her brother and husband had been bewitched. I got her to put down in writing the names of the persons concerned, and where they lived. The story is as follows:—When Mrs. S. was a girl, she lived at Hawkwell. One day a Mrs. M. came selling penny brooms (the real thing composed of switches of the broom plant tied together). Mrs. M. was wearing a red cloak and a black bonnet. My friend (afterwards Mrs. S.) opened the door and was told by the broom seller to ask her mother if she wanted one. She returned saying her mother did not want one. Mrs. M. flew then into a rage and declared she had not asked her mother. With that Mrs. M. walked round the house, and looked in at one of the windows. Mrs. S. said her little brother was never quite right in his mind from that hour. This of course, can be explained by the fact that the child was frightened, but Mrs. S. would have none of that explanation; she was certain that Mrs. M. had purposely injured the boy. One is reminded of the old custom of putting certain flowers such as St. John's Wort in windows to prevent witches from looking in. To continue the story—the boy's mother was crossing a field one day when she passed a stranger. From descriptions she had heard of 'Cunning' Murrell, she felt sure that the stranger must be he, so, turning back, she asked him if he were Mr. Murrell. On being assured in the affirmative, she told him all about her little boy being bewitched.

Murrell returned home with her to see the afflicted child. He cut his hair, finger nails and toe nails, and putting the cuttings into a bottle, buried it under the door step. But no relief seems to have been gained for the sufferer.

The case of the husband of Mrs. S. is a little difficult to tell about, but my friend assured me that what happened to her husband was quite common, and was 'the leastest thing' that an evil-minded person could do to another. Mr. S. was crossing a field when he met a Canewdon, man and passed a remark about not taking all the rabbits. This the man seemed to resent, and would not answer. Mr. S. was then attacked by a swarm of parasites, the same being ''the leastest thing'' that could be done. The plague could not be stayed for days, but no one else suffered any inconveniences. The daughter of Mrs. S. confirmed this story regarding her father.

'Cunning' Murrell was born at Rayleigh, but finally settled at Hadleigh, where he became famous as the maker of charms, and for his supposed powers of detecting witches. A Rayleigh resident tells how Murrell made a witch bottle for his father. Murrell professed to cure folks of all manner of ills, and when they returned saying they were no better, he used to say, ''Oh! but she is a strong one! (meaning the witch), but I can get the better of her for another half-crown.''

An old gentleman still living at Rayleigh has recently told me a great deal about 'Cunning' Murrell. He was supposed to be able to call out the Canewdon witches at will. One of these witches was supposed

to be the parson's wife, another the butcher's wife, but who the others were my old friend does not remember. He says a Canewdon girl went to keep house for his uncle at Woodham Ferrers, but she was one of the witches, and his poor uncle knew no peace after her advent, for nothing in the house would keep still!

Murrell was great at recovering stolen property. In one instance where a man had lost a horse, the owner was told it was at a certain place in Suffolk, and there right enough it was! This artful one only told the whereabouts of stolen property on condition that the owners did not prosecute. He was well nicknamed 'Cunning.'

There was a man who boasted that he "did for" Murrell. His donkey had been bewitched and he believed 'Cunning' had done the deed, so he got a bottle, put in it some of the donkey's hair and some of his own nail parings. The bottle he then put in the fire. When it burst there came a loud banging at the door, which was locked. He would not open it, and very soon 'Cunning' Murrell was dead.

This same Rayleigh resident told me some curious stories concerning himself, his father, and his grandfather. His father kept a farm at Laindon, and had a parson to lodge with him. This parson was a wizard, and had three imps, all of which had belonged to his father, so he said. My informant says his sister used to wait on the parson, and was told by him never to take a light into his room, as she might see these creatures. "Will they hurt me?" she asked. "Oh no," was the reply, "they won't

hurt.'' One night she went into his room after dark, and saw the three creatures standing against the table legs. They were just as high as the table. All the dwellers in the house saw these imps. A brother from a distance came and saw what he thought to be a black cat on the edge of a pail. ''I didn't know you had a black cat, father,'' he said. ''No more we 'aven't no black cat,' 'replied the father, ''it be one of they things.'' My old friend says he saw one on the stairs one night as he went up to bed. It looked like a mole, and ran backwards and forwards across the stairs. ''You don't come into my room,'' he said. But when he was in bed, he saw it standing by the foot of his bed. He tried to sit up, but something caught him by both his ears and held him down!

A farm labourer saw one of the parson's imps walking on some nettles, but managing to do so without bending them. This so frightened the man that he would not work there any more.

At last the farmer told the parson he must go, ''For,'' said he, ''I would sooner have the devil.''

My informant's grandfather lived in a yard at Wickford, right next door to a witch. She bewitched the pigs so that they died. But before the last one expired, it was put on a fire. The witch came at once knocking at the door, complaining that she was so hot.

More stories he tells concerning Billericay. A Mr. W., who kept a farm there, was great at dealing with witches and haunted houses. Some of his colts were bewitched, and died. He then got

a poker, made it red hot, and cruelly thrust it down the throat of the living colt. It of course died, but so did the witch. (These stories are told about the days when there was no Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.)

The same farmer bought a haunted house, so the story goes. Before he slept in it, he took the precaution of putting against the house the tail end of a cart in which there were some horse shoes and other things. After he got up to bed, the boards on either side the bed began to rise. Mr. W. had by him a thick stick with which he banged on the floor. A voice was heard to say, "Don't hit them!" Mr. W. then ordered the witch to go out and make a noise in the cart, which she immediately did.

Still another story is about a man going up Bread and Cheese Hill (Thundersley). He was driving a waggon, and while going up, he overtook an old woman whose boot lace was hanging on the ground. He called out to her about it, when suddenly one of the wheels came off his waggon and rolled down the hill. He ran after it, and flogged it with his whip. This made the witch cry out in pain, "Oh don't hit it!"

Another Rayleigh resident told me of the bewitching of her grandmother at Southchurch by a hawker from whom she refused to buy goods. From that hour she was never able to lie in bed, but always slept on the floor.

An old resident of Chigwell told me that when she was a girl, her mother lost her purse; thinking it had been stolen, she went to consult a "wise woman," who told her the purse was not stolen,

but was under a corner of the sitting room carpet. On reaching home, the purse was found where the wise woman had said it was.

There was a "wise woman" at Woodham Walter to whom was brought a child who was badly burnt on the arm, through falling on the bars of the fire place. She made the sign of the cross over the burns, muttering an incantation, and then said, "Now, child, you will have no scar on your arm." The child is now a man, and has no trace of the burns, though they were severe. Is this due to the power of suggestion?

Belief in magic cures of all kinds is very strong in Essex, such as the cure for whooping cough, which hails from Wickham Bishops. "Take a hair from the tail of a stray dog and put it between two slices of bread and butter and give to the child to eat."

Wart charms and charmers abound. The sign of the cross made over the warts, a muttered incantation, with the information that the warts would disappear without the knowledge of the sufferer, proved effectual in the case of a schoolboy at Woodham, whose hands were covered with them, for suddenly one day he became aware that not a single wart was left. Dr. Culpepper's cure for warts is practised at Stock—it is to rub a black snail over them. The numeral nine is the magic number according to Dr. Culpepper, for one must rub the black snail nine times one way and nine times the other over the warts, then stick it on a blackthorn tree, and as the snail dies the warts will disappear. Rubbing warts with bean pods is an Essex cure; the

pods must then be buried secretly. I believe the pods must first be thrown over the left shoulder.

At Terling, a wart-charmer cured a boy whose ears were encircled by these undesirable adherents. Passing along the road one day, the boy (now a man and known to the writer) was stopped by a stranger who said, "What's the matter, sonny?" "Warts," briefly replied the boy. "Let's have a look," said the stranger. He turned the boy's face away from him while looking at the warts. Then said, "That's all right, sonny, they will go suddenly one day." The mother of the lad was incredulous when he told her about the promise, but a few days later she saw that every wart had disappeared.

A Forest Gate joiner, who suffered badly from bleeding warts and was thus much hindered in his work, was cured by a fellow workman. "Jack," he said, "let me charm those warts away." He passed his hands over them, repeating "Hickerty, dickerty," and remarking, "One day you will lose those warts." Several days followed and the charm was forgotten by the sufferer, but one day when washing his hands, he suddenly noticed that the warts had all gone; and what is more, they have never returned.

The custom of passing a child through an ash tree is still practised in Essex. In 1925, a child of Fairstead was taken to Terling and passed through an ash, and was thus cured of rupture. In old days, there was quite a ritual to be observed in connection with the passing of a child through a tree. The ash was generally a young one specially cleft

for the purpose. The child was undressed, the father and mother stood on either side of the tree, and passed the child one to the other. The child was then dressed and the tree bound up. As the tree healed, the child recovered. When speaking of this curious custom at a meeting, a lady told me afterwards that it reminded her of what she had seen in Afghanistan —a father and mother passing a child through a hole in a wall and saying, "Be a thief, be a thief." This child was desired to be an expert robber.

"Telling the Bees" is practised at Stock and many other places in Essex. Bees are supposed to possess great powers of discernment, and to be mortally offended if not told of important happenings in the family. When a death occurs, the right thing to do is to knock three times with the front door key on each hive, and then say who has died. The hives used to have crape put on them. When a wedding is the event, red is the colour to put on the hives; cake and wine used to be put for the bees. The early settlers in New England evidently took this custom with them from the Homeland, for Whittier, in his touching poem *Telling the Bees*, has a lover hearing the maid telling the bees of the death of his beloved.

TELLING THE BEES.

"Just the same as a month before
The House and the trees,
The Barn's brown gable and the vine by the door,
Nothing changed but the hives of bees.

Before them under the garden wall
Forward and back
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small
Draping each hive with a shred of black.

Trembling I listened—the summer sun
Had the chill of snow,
For I knew she was telling the bees of one
Gone on the journey we all must go.

Then I said to myself, 'My Mary weeps
For the dead to-day,
Haply her blind old grandsire sleeps
The fret and pain of his age away.'

But her dog whined low; on the doorway sill,
With his cane to his chin
The old man sat, and the chore-girl still
Sang to the bees stealing out and in.

And the songs she was singing ever since
In my heart sounds on!
'Stay at home pretty bees, fly not hence!
Mistress Mary is dead and gone.' ''

Coal is a lucky thing to pick up! I saw five grown persons on Rayleigh Hill all throwing pieces of coal over their left shoulders. The coal had dropped from a cart. A woman going to work at the house of some friends picked up a large piece and took it with her. She told my friend that the coal would be sure to bring her luck. A few days later she came

with a beaming face. A former mistress had written offering her a home for life. "Didn't I tell you the coal would bring me luck!"

A great deal of Folk-lore has to do with divination. A writer in *The Essex Literary Journal* for 1838-39 tells of an Essex custom practised by maidens in order to be able to get a peep at their future lovers. They used to fasten their stays by a garter to the bedroom wall when going to bed, then walk into bed backwards. If the lover was true, his apparition would walk round the bed.

Flowers such as the St. John's Wort, the Yarrow, and the White Rose were flowers of divination.

Speaking of apparitions, I am reminded of a curious story told me by an Essex woman. She said that when she was a girl, her father's mother lived with them. The old lady used to go to bed regularly every night at nine o'clock. But one night a most unusual thing happened—she stayed up late talking. No sooner had she got upstairs, though, than she came running down, white and trembling. "Oh, come up," she cried, "my ghost is in my bed!" All the family rushed upstairs, when sure enough there was a figure asleep in the bed, wearing Grannie's night cap and nightdress. But on closer inspection it was found to be a young brother of my informant. He had not intended going to sleep, was only going to give Grannie a start when she came upstairs, but as she was so long in coming he had fallen asleep!

FOLK-LORE

THE Folk-Lore Society explains that the term Folk-Lore, viz., The Learning of the People, was coined by the late Mr. W. J. Thomas to "replace the clumsy expression 'popular antiquities.' It has established itself in the language as the generic term under which the traditional Beliefs, Customs, Songs and Sayings . . . are comprehended and included."

Thomas Tusser, born at Rivenhall in 1513, was the man who originated so many of the Essex sayings which to-day are proverbs all over the English-speaking world. Most of them are found in his *Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*; John Ray, born at Black Notley in 1628, also collected many proverbs.

"Every dog has his day and a cat two Sundays."

"A man of words and not of deeds is like a garden full of weeds."

"Better late than never."

"The higher the plum-tree, the richer the plum,
The richer the cobbler, the blacker his thumb."

"It's the rolling stone that gathers no moss."

"At Christmas play and make good cheer, for Christmas comes but once a year."

Some curiously quaint words are used by Essex folk. There is the word grunsell, the wooden part of the door step. It is an old English word and is used by Shakespeare. I remember a woman telling me that during the Great War a bomb fell near her home, and, said she, "It knocked me clean back'ards off the grunsell."

The old Saxon ending for words is used—housen, shopen, shoen, etc.

Most things are described by the old folk as "little ole"—"a little ole man" or "a little ole child." The word 'wonderful' is used greatly. When I was visiting a sick woman once, she told me she was "a wonderful poor creature." Hodermadod, for snail, is a very curious word, and didacoy for Gipsy. I have heard the expression "doing the codger's dance," which seems to mean to hurry away.

White, in his *History of Essex*, 1841, gives the names of residents of different places. Those for Terling are remarkable, as are also the names of their houses. There was the Rev. Gooday, of Crackbone; Sarah Boreham, of Wasses; John Cousin, of Three Ashes; Golden Fairhead, of Leys Hall; William Fairhead, of Porridge Pot Hall; and Benjamin Snow, of Scarletts.

In Halstead there used to be two houses with the names of Slow House and Slow House Broom.

A house at Stock, now pulled down, was called Five Chimneys.

* * * * * *

Tusser tells us about Harvest customs in Essex:—

"In Harvest time, harvest folks, servants and all
Should make together good cheer in the hall;
And let them be merry all harvest time long.
Once ended thy harvest, let none be beguiled.
Please such as did please thee, man, woman and child."

Tusser says that ribbons, laces, and even pins were given to the children who had helped with the Harvest.

Hone, in his *Every Day Book*, tells of Essex harvest customs. The Harvest supper consisted of roast beef, plum pudding, and beer. At the beginning of the feast, the following health was sung:—

"Here's a health to our master,
The lord of the feast,
God bless his endeavours
And send him increase;
May prosper his crops, boys,
That we may reap another year.
Here's to our master's health, boys,
Come, drink off your beer."

And after supper they sang:—

"Now harvest is ended and supper is past,
Here's our mistresse's good health, boys,
Come drink a full glass;
For she is a good woman, she provides us good cheer,
Here's your mistresse's good health, boys,
Come, drink off your beer."

Customs varied according to the place. At Great Waltham, a very quaint old village still, less than fifty years ago the old customs were kept up. There was a special day setapart, usually a Thursday, as a day of Thanksgiving. All farm hands were expected to attend a service at the Parish Church. The drum and fife band from Dunmow came over. After the service, this band led the way out of church, playing, and the church bells were rung. A procession followed the band to a certain spot in the village, where the band played for some time. In the evening, the men who worked for the squire went to the Harvest Supper at the Mill House. After supper, the rest of the village folk were free to join in the singing. The other farm workers had their supper at their own farms. At one particular farm they had first of all batter pudding with gravy, then roast beef, leg of pork, or leg of mutton, and plum pudding. There was singing after supper. One of the songs they always sang was "Who killed cock robin?" It is not without significance that this simple nursery rhyme was sung, for the robin figures largely in folk-lore. In far-off days when folks believed that a spirit inhabited every tree, it was thought that these tree spirits sometimes took the form of birds. The wren, and sometimes the robin, represented the spirit of the apple tree. Dr. Rendel Harris tells us that the nursery rhyme, "Cock Robin is dead and gone to his rest," is one of the oldest folk-songs in our language.

The last load of corn brought home was always

the most important one. The fields were raked over with huge rakes, and these "rakings," as they were called, were generally enough to fill a waggon. Men sat on the top of this waggon, holding over them a large branch from an oak* tree. The Harvest horns were blown as they went along, and songs were sung. These horns were those of bullocks, and were kept at the farm house. The last of the Harvest pay was called "The Largess."

Some of the other songs sung at the Harvest supper were—"The Violet Girl," "Beat upon the Drum, Boys," "The Leather Breeches," and "The Poor Old Cow." At the end of the song "Beat upon the Drum," the singers all *said* the title and tapped on the table with their fore-finger.

In the north of Essex, before the general Harvest Supper, there was what was called the Wheat Ending Supper. As soon as the wheat was carted, this supper was given by the farmer, and the fare was thesame as that at the general Harvest Supper. Among the songs, after supper, was always "The Union Jack of Old England", sung standing, with much waving of arms.

The oak branch was put on the last load brought in, and there was the usual shouting. The horses were decorated with ribbons and garlands of flowers.

The old harvester who told me about the North Essex customs as he remembered them, also told me that on Christmas Eve the farm workers were invited

* No doubt the use of the oak branch at Harvest Homes was a survival from Druidical times, when the oak was the sacred tree under which all feasts were held.

to supper at the squire's. There were the usual meats and plum pudding. Christmas carols were sung after supper, and then the squire's family would come with their musical instruments, and play to them.

Gleaning was common less than fifty years ago. At Hadleigh and other places the Church bell was rung at eight in the morning and six in the evening. This was by way of signal as to when to start and leave off gleaning, and was called The Gleaners' Bell. Gleaners may still be seen in the north of Essex.

Many quaint customs were observed on May Day. Some are being revived. A hymn is sung at dawn on the tower of Purleigh Church. An old gentleman of ninety says he remembers being taken as a child to see the village folk dance the village dance—"Pig in the Hole"—on May-Day, on Littlebury Village Green. A garland with a doll in the centre used to be taken from house to house at Saffron Waldon.

Hone, in his *Every Day Book*, tells of a very curious custom at Bishops Stortford. This took place on Michaelmas Day, or Ganging Day, as it was called. The young men played the game of "Follow my Leader," and every person they met was bumped (all respectable women stayed indoors that day). Unfortunately they called at all the public houses, where ale and plum cake were given them. If the weather was fine, they stayed in the fields all night.

Perhaps the most valuable bit of Folk lore we Essex people possess is the Maldon Song, which tells

of the deeds of Brithnoth, slain by the Danes in the Battle of Maldon about the year 993 A.D.

I quote from Colt W. H. Lumsden's paraphrase, taken from *The Maldon Guide*.

"He bade each youth turn loose his horse and drive
it far away,
And onward go with steadfast heart to mingle in
the fray.

* * * * * *

There Brithnoth then arrayed his men and taught
them how to stand,
To keep their rank and fearless grasp the buckler
in the hand.
And when they were in order set, he lighted from
his steed,
Among his own loved household-men whom he
knew good at need.

* * * * * *

Ruler of Nations! I give thanks for all that Thou
has lent
Of joys in this world. Now have I, O gracious
Lord! most need
That Thou show favour to my soul, that it to Thee
may speed,
And to Thy Kingdom, Lord of Angels! pass in
peace."